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The Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamaka schol of Buddhism and its influence on Rnying Ma doctrine with special reference to Santaraksita's Madhyamakalamkara

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THE YOGĀCĀRA-SVĀTANTRIKA-MADHYAMAKA SCHOOL OF BUDDHISM AND ITS INFLUENCE ON RNYING MA DOCTRINE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ŚĀNTARAKṢITA'S *MADHYAMAKĀLAṂKĀRA*

ANDREE DOMINIQUE MESSENT

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in the Faculty of Arts, Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

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ABSTRACT

Śāntarakṣita, the 8th century Indian Mādhyamika considered by Tibetan doxographers as the founder of what is presently known as the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka synthesis, set out his philosophy in the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*. This text is examined together with his more detailed *Tattvasaṃgraha* and in the light of its most extensive Tibetan commentary, the *dbU ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad 'jam dbyangs bla ma dgyes pa'i zhal lung* by Mi pham 'jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho (1846-1912). Śāntarakṣita's ideas are shown in historical context to be a structured and doxographically clear expression of philosophical ideas and trends already extant separately in the tradition. The significance of his work lies in the way he brings together three main streams of thought: 1) the syllogistic method and epistemological analysis of the Buddhist logicians; 2) the analysis of cognition and of the gradual stages of the soteriological path developed by Yogācāra; and 3) the establishment of ultimate and relative truths (*don dam bden pa, kun rdzob bden pa*) according to Madhyamaka.

The circularity of Śāntarakṣita's refutation of 'true existence' is shown to rest on a definition of existence that precludes permanence from the outset. Unlike other philosophers, he does not examine the relationship between parts and wholes but refutes the possibility of both. It is argued that he establishes the reflexivity of consciousness without metaphysical entailment. The coherence of the Two Truths framework is shown to rely on Śāntarakṣita's theory of the discursive ultimate (*rnam grangs pa'i don dam*) accepted by rNying ma pas since Mi pham, from which viewpoint alone the distinction between ultimate and relative can be made. Many dGe lugs pa doxographical definitions of Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka—with regard to *ālaya*, the reflexivity of consciousness, and the relative existence of phenomena by way of their characteristics—are found not to apply to Śāntarakṣita. Mi pham's own views are strongly influenced by those of Śāntarakṣita, illustrating the latter's influence on recent formulations of rNying ma doctrine.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

This dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

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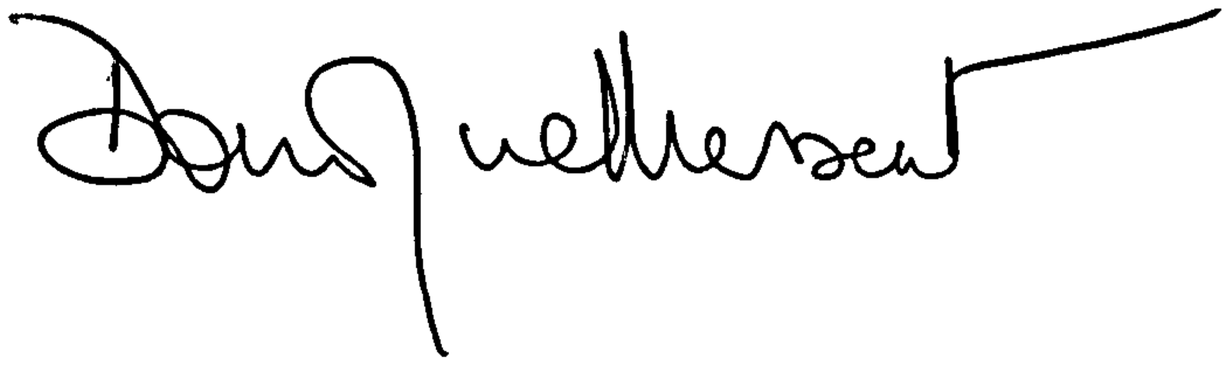

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ABBREVIATIONS

AK	Abhidharmakośa by Vasubandhu
AKB	Abhidharmakośabhāsyam by Vasubandhu
BCA	Bodhicaryāvatāra by Śāntideva
CS	Catuḥśataka by Āryadeva
JA	Journal Asiatique
JIP	Journal of Indian Philosophy
MAL	Madhyamakālaṃkāra by Śāntarakṣita
MALP	Madhyamakālaṃkārapañjikā by Kamalaśīla
MALV	Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti by Śāntarakṣita
MAV	Madhyamakāvatara by Candrakīrti
MHK	Madhyamakahṛdayakārikā by Bhāvaviveka
MMK	Mūlamadhyamakakārikā by Nāgārjuna
PEW	Philosophy East and West
PPU	Prajñāpāramitopadeśa by Ratnākaraśānti
PV	Pramāṇavārttika by Dharmakīrti
SDV	Satyadvayavibhaṅga by Jñānagarbha
SDVV	Satyadvayavibhaṅgavṛtti by Jñānagarbha
SUNY	State University of New York (publishers)
TS	Tattvasaṃgraha by Śāntarakṣita
TSP	Kamalaśīla's pañjikā on the Tattvasaṃgraha

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

I.1 Introduction

Śāntarakṣita lived in India in the 8th century C.E. (c. 700-785).[1] He was a Buddhist proponent of Madhyamaka, the philosophy of the Middle Way, and the treatises he composed represent the last phase of Madhyamaka development in India.[2] In his later life he lived in bSam yas monastery, Tibet, where he died. He is credited by Tibetan historians with establishing Buddhism in that country with the assistance of the king Khri srong sde brtsan and the yogi Padmasambhava.[3] His life and influence therefore uniquely span both India and Tibet. Not only did his thought influence views held during the early dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet, but even many centuries later, in the second dissemination, they continued to be taught and commented upon. In particular, Tibetan doxography recognizes him as the founder of what is currently called the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka school of Buddhism.[4] Still today, his works are studied in Tibetan dGe lugs pa colleges in exile as part of the curriculum on Svātantrika-Madhyamaka and as a primary source for Sautrāntika views.[5]

Surprisingly little has been published on Śāntarakṣita by Western scholars and the research that has been completed is very selective. Almost all the published studies con-

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[1]Most sources do not provide a date for his birth, although Tarthang Tulku (1977:161) says that he was born about 700 C.E. but does not cite his sources for this date. Neither is there a precise date for his death, but according to an early document (Dun Huang IOL 689/2), he died soon after the construction of the bSam yas temple, which was probably around 779 C.E. See *The Great Perfection* by Samten G. Karmay, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1988, pp.76ff.

[2]Ruegg (1981:85); Lopez (1987:19).

[3]See Chapter II below.

[4]The earliest instance of his being called the founder of a school is in Ye shes sde, in Ruegg (1981a). See also Lopez (1987:20). This point is discussed below in Chapter III.

[5]See Klein (1998:109). Bransford Wilson (1984:21,49) explains that in sGo mang College and most other dGe lugs pa colleges, the curriculum presents (1) the *ālayavijñāna* from the Cittamātra point of view; (2) the *Prajñāpāramitā* from the Yogācāra-Svātantrika point of view, using mainly Haribhadra's work, and (3) the *abhidharma* from the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika points of view, using Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*. But many dGe lugs scholars would learn about Svātantrika by studying presentations of tenets (*grub 'mtha*) rather than reading original Sanskrit texts even in translation (Lopez:1987:23).

cern the *Tattvasaṃgraha* (TS) while Śāntarakṣita's other works are largely unexplored. In addition, research has often focused on logical and epistemological questions leaving aside the broader aspects of his doctrinal view relating to metaphysics and soteriology. The present study aims to contribute towards a more comprehensive understanding of his significance as a Buddhist author by examining his *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* (MAL), considered to be the founding text of the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka school of Mahāyāna Buddhism and the work in which he presents his own personal standpoint.[6] Tibetans count the MAL as one of the three chief works illuminating Svātantrika (*rang rgyud shar gsum*), along with Jñānagarbha's *Satyadvayavibhaṅga* and Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka*.[7]

For several decades in the 20th century, one of the decisive factors accounting for the academic neglect of Śāntarakṣita was probably his inaccessibility.[8] Most of his works are no longer extant in Sanskrit, and it appears that none were ever translated into Chinese. Until relatively recently, few Buddhologists read Tibetan, the language in which they are extant. And when Tibetan Buddhism became a field of study in its own right, from the late 1970s, the Tibetan preference for Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka was understandably reflected by a relative lack of academic curiosity in Svātantrika. Furthermore, the text is considered difficult because it is so condensed, and assumes prior knowledge of the many debates to which it alludes.

There are signs that the tide is now turning, and several theses on Śāntarakṣita are at present in preparation: Sara McClintock, working at Harvard University, USA, has very recently submitted a Ph.D. thesis on the concept of omniscience in Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, focussing on the TS; James Blumenthal, at Oregon State University, USA,

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[6]Ruegg (1981:90); Ichigō (1985:LX); Lipman (1979:11).
[7]Eckel (1987:15); Lopez (1987:21).
[8]For discussions accounting for the neglect of the MAL amongst Western scholars see Lipman (1979: 1-11) and Lopez (1987:20ff).

has just completed a thesis on Śāntarakṣita addressing dGe lugs pa interpretations of Śāntarakṣita's thought, with special reference to the MAL; and Jundo Nagashima, at Bristol University, UK, is researching late Madhyamaka doxography which, although not exclusively concerned with Śāntarakṣita, will help to place him in a more precise doctrinal context. Finally, Marie-Louise Friquegnon, studying at William Paterson University, New Jersey, published a booklet in 2001 on Śāntarakṣita in the Wadsworth Philosophers Series which also reflects that interest in him is broadening. She is currently working on a study of his *Tattvasiddhi*, exploring the connections between his philosophy in the TS and MAL and Vajrayāna. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that a number of studies have been undertaken by Japanese scholars in recent years, only some of which are available in English translation. In particular, Ichigō's critical edition of the MAL is a milestone in our knowledge of this text.

The present study can therefore be seen as a complementary element in this new wave of interest in Śāntarakṣita, specifically contributing a philosophical appraisal of the rNying ma pa interpretation of the MAL embodied in Mi pham's commentary on the text. In a sense, one might anticipate the interest of this study to be a better understanding of the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis, and of how Śāntarakṣita succeeds in bringing together these two Mahāyāna doctrines whose proponents, for centuries before him, had sometimes been bitter rivals. One is tempted to wonder whether these two schools are really compatible, and whether the doctrinal synthesis that Śāntarakṣita attempts is anything more than an artificial feat of rhetoric. But we will not be constrained by these questions, which tie us to examining his work in the light of its doxographical classification rather than as a piece of philosophy in its own right. As is often the case, philosophers do not exactly fit the classifications made of them. The approach we will take here is to appraise his view philosophically especially in the light of Mi pham's interpretation of his thought. We will provide evidence showing that the most artificial feature of Śāntarakṣita's work is

the doxographical label it bears. One point that emerges is the way certain dGe lugs pa characterizations of his work are less accurate than their rNying ma equivalents.

I.2 The approach taken by the present study

Despite Śāntarakṣita's importance as the founder of a school of Madhyamaka, Indian and Tibetan Madhyamaka literature reveals relatively few details about him. There are few detailed commentaries on the MAL in either Sanskrit or Tibetan, and he has no written biography. To account for this neglect, one must consider that Prāsaṅgika views were dominant in Tibet from the 13th century onwards.[9] However recent research has uncovered more commentarial sources than hitherto known in Western scholarship, so that the most up-to-date recension of the commentaries on the MAL that are available to us is given as follows:[10]

Sanskrit commentaries on the MAL[11]

- Autocommentary:*Madhyamakālaṁkāravṛtti,* P. [101] (5285) sa 52b1-84b7)
- Kamalaśīla: *Madhyamakālaṁkārapañjikā*, P. [101] (5286) sa 84b7-143b2.
- Mimaki (1982a) and Tillemans (1984) cite a lost Sanskrit commentary on the MAL by Dharmamitra, said by Bu ston (ii.161) and Tāranātha (fol. 99B) to be the disciple of Guṇaprabha.

Tibetan commentaries on the MAL

- Phya ba chos kyi seng ge (1109-1169): *dbu ma rgyan gyi 'grel pa* (Tohoku 3887)
- Tsong kha pa (1357-1419): *dbu ma rgyan gyi brjed byang*
- Tsong kha pa (1357-1419): *dbu ma rgyan gyi zin bris*
- Shes bya kun rig (1367-1449):[12] *dbu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*
- Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376-1451): *dbu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*
- Mi pham: *dbu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad 'jam dbyangs bla ma dgyes pa'i zhal lung*
- Mdo sngags chos kyi rgya mtsho (1903-1957): *dbu ma rgyan gyi gzhung 'grel rig pa'i lam gyi snang ba*
- Mdo sngags chos kyi rgya tsho (1903-1957): *dbu ma rgyan gyi mchan 'grel nyung ngu* and *dbu ma rgyan gyi mchan 'grel nyung ngu lta ba ngan pa gcod pa'i ral gri*

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[9]Lopez (1987:21-23).

[10]For more details see the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center website. Lipman, writing in 1979, cites far fewer commentaries than this.

[11]Despite their titles, the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra-vṛtti-madhyamaka-pratipadā-siddhi-nāma* (P. [114] (5573) and *Madhyamakālaṃkāra-upadeśa* by Śāntipā, also known as Ratnākaraśānti or Śāntipāda, are not on Śāntarakṣita's MAL.

[12]Shes bya kun rig was a Sa skya teacher, and is given as one of the teachers of Sa skya mChog ldan (1428-1509).

Further research is therefore needed to examine the wide variety of commentaries available, covering Sa skya, dGe lugs and rNying ma views. The present study must therefore be seen in perspective as a modest beginning to this process. So why has Mi pham's commentary been chosen from amongst these as the lens through which this thesis views Śāntarakṣita's thought?

In the mid 19th century, when several lamas of the ecumenical *ris med* movement[13] in Tibet attempted to gather together all extant Buddhist teachings in the country in an effort to preserve them for posterity,[14] the nation's debt to Śāntarakṣita was explicitly acknowledged by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po[15] (1820-1892), who asked[16] the rNying ma pa scholar Mi pham 'jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho (1846-1912) to compose a comprehensive commentary on the MAL, prefaced by a short biography. The aim was to fill the gap left by centuries of neglect. In using this commentary by Mi pham as a vehicle to explore the philosophical views expressed in the MAL, the approach taken here is therefore new in two respects. Firstly, until now, all published research on the TS and the MAL has employed the respective commentaries to these works written by Kamalaśīla. Only Kennard Lipman studied the MAL with reference to Mi pham's commentary in a ground-breaking thesis that remains unpublished.[17] And yet Mi pham's commentary is of great interest for a number of reasons. Although it was written almost a thousand years

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[13]See *The Rimé (ris med) Movement of Jamgon Kongtrul the Great* by Ringu Tulku, paper presented to the 7th conference of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, June, 1995. Unpublished.

[14]This monumental gathering together of Buddhist works was deemed necessary because many lineages and practices were thought to be on the verge of extinction.

[15]For more on his life and his role in the Ris med movement, see *Masters of Meditation and Miracles* by Tulku Thondup, Shambhala, Boston and London, 1996, pp.215-221.

[16]This accounts for the title of Mi pham's commentary: *An exposition on the treatise [entitled] 'The Ornament of the Middle Way' that will delight the lama [who is like] Manjuśri (dbu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad 'jam dbyangs bla ma dgyes pa'i zhal lung).* The lama who will be delighted by this work refers to 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po.

[17]*A Study of Śāntarakṣita's Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, thesis submitted by Kennard Lipman to the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada, in 1979 and unpublished. The copy consulted is on microfilm. More recently, Lipman has alluded to Mi pham's commentary on the MAL in a paper entitled 'What is Buddhist Logic?' published in *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation,* ed. S. Goodman and R.M. Davidson, SUNY, 1992.

after that of Kamalaśīla, it is a valuable tool for understanding the MAL from the point of view of the history of philosophy, not least because it is able to take into account the various doctrinal debates and controversies that took place in the intervening period. Furthermore, Mi pham's exegesis of the MAL is made from the perspective of the Great Madhyamaka *(dbu ma chen po),* a late Tibetan development which was particularly strong in the 19th and 20th centuries, and which assimilated the characteristically Yogācāra doctrine of *tathāgatagarbha* into Madhyamaka philosophy.[18] The mutually supportive relationship between the Great Madhyamaka and Śāntarakṣita's view is of interest in determining Śāntarakṣita's long-term doctrinal influence. The second aspect of this study that is new concerns the fact it is based on a rNying ma commentary. Until now, dGe lugs pa doxographical writings have provided modern scholars with their main—if not only—sources of knowledge of the Svātantrika school.[19] Mi pham's approach is more sympathetic to Śāntarakṣita than that which is characteristic of dGe lugs pa writers,[20] not least because his own view is so close to that of his predecessor.

Of significance, too, in determining the choice of Mi pham's commentary is the issue of the influence of Śāntarakṣita's doctrine on that of the rNying ma school of Tibetan Buddhism, and this is explicitly stated as a secondary topic in the title of this thesis. We will see later that Mi pham himself was profoundly influenced by Śāntarakṣita, and since Mi pham has become one of the leading authorities of rNying ma doctrine, his commentary on the MAL can be seen as one of the most important texts linking Śāntarakṣita with the rNying ma school as a whole.

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[18]The term 'Yogācāra-Madhyamaka' is sometimes used by rNying ma pas to describe this movement, and should not be confused with Śāntarakṣita's 'Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka'.
[19]For example, Donald Lopez bases his characterization of Svātantrika on the *Presentation of Tenets* of the dGe lugs pa scholar lCang skya rol pa'i rdo rje (1717-1786) and other dGe lugs pa sources.
[20]In the second chapter of his ground-breaking study, Donald Lopez (1987:55-81) illustrates how dGe lugs scholars focus on the differences between Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika, whereas Mi pham is more concerned with their common ground.

Mi pham considered the MAL to be especially important because of the way it integrates the two major trends of Mahāyāna philosophy, Yogācāra and Madhyamaka.[21] He also valued its emphasis on establishing the conceptual ultimate (*paryāyaparamārtha; rnam grangs pa'i don dam*). While the dGe lugs pa distinction between Svātantrikas and Prāsaṅgikas is drawn primarily from their different uses of logical method, Mi pham's interest in Svātantrika has more to do with its approach to the Two Truths.[22] He explores this chiefly in his commentary on the MAL which is one of his earliest works since he makes reference to it in the commentary he wrote on *Bodhicaryāvatara* IX.2 in 1878.[23] Later on, he developed the same themes in works such as his *Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me*, the *mKhas 'jug* and *dbU ma'i lta khrid zab mo bzhugs so*[24], showing how foundational the MAL proved to be to the development of Mi pham's own thought.

Mi pham's main tenet is that Śāntarakṣita's unique contribution to the development of Mahāyāna doctrine lies in the subtle way he approaches the Two Truths.[25] He follows Cittamātra analysis in relative truth *(kun rdzob bden pa, saṃvṛtisatya)* and in ultimate truth *(don dam bden pa, paramārthasatya)* he proposes a two-step approach: first an ultimate reality that cannot be expressed in words *(rnam grangs min pa'i don dam),* and secondly an ultimate reality that can be expressed in words *(rnam grangs pa'i don dam).* The first of these is realized during meditation, and the second comes in the phase after the realization of the ultimate in meditation, in what can be called the post-meditation period (sometimes termed 'meditational aftermath'). By comparison, Prāsaṅgika scholars do not accept that the ultimate can ever be expressed in words, and place more emphasis on the indivisibility of the Two Truths.

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[21]Pettit (1998:57). See also Chapters II and VII below.
[22]Pettit (1998:109).
[23]Lipman (1979:2). This part of Mi pham's commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatara* is translated in Lipman (1979:165). The dating of Mi pham's commentary on the MAL can only be done comparatively to other works by him since there is no date given in the colophon.
[24]The Tibetan text and English translation is found in *Calm and Clear* by Lama Mipham, Tibetan Nyingma Meditation Center, Berkeley, 1973, under the title "Instructions on Vision in the Middle Way".
[25] Cf. Tarthang Tulku, *Crystal Mirror V*, pp.162-3. Tarthang Tulku is a contemporary rNying ma lama.

However, according to Mi pham, the MAL encompasses the Prāsaṅgika view, and he presents the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka viewpoint as a bridge that enables the reader to cross over to the further shore of Prāsaṅgika which he himself acknowledges to be the highest view. In summary, therefore, he argues that the fundamental intent of these two Madhyamaka schools is the same and the difference between them is just a matter of emphasis.

Our approach is to take Mi pham's commentary on the MAL as an important way of illuminating the meaning of the text and, in a second phase, to critique Śāntarakṣita's philosophy so described from the point of view of a philosopher. The main body of this study is in three parts. Taken together they address what are arguably the most important and characteristic features of Śāntarakṣita's work. The first part contextualizes the MAL both historically (Chapter II) and philosophically (Chapter III), identifying the main topics that were current in his time. The second part analyses verses 1-62 of the MAL in detail. First, in Chapter V, it explores some of the philosophical questions raised by Śāntarakṣita's use of the 'neither one nor many argument' *(ekānekaviyogahetu; gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs).* Then it analyses his application of this argument to a number of issues: God, cessation, persons and universals (Chapter VI), the existence of the external world (Chapter VII), and the mind and cognition (Chapter VIII). The third part considers Śāntarakṣita's approach to the Two Truths in verses 63-97 of the MAL (Chapter IX).

I.3 Sources used

I.3.1 Written sources

Only fragments of the MAL are now extant in Sanskrit, and the standard text is the Tibetan translation found in the *bstan gyur.* The 1957-81 Peking edition[26] of the *bstan gyur* was used in this study and references to it are prefaced 'P.'. Masamichi Ichigō[27] has

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[26] *Tibetan Tripitaka,* Peking Edition, ed. D.T. Suzuki, Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, Tokyo, 1957-81.
[27] *Madhyamakālaṁkāra of Śāntarakṣita with his own commentary or vṛtti and with the subcommentary or pañjikā of Kamalaśīla,* ed. Masamichi Ichigō, Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto, 1985.

published a critical edition of the MAL along with an edition of Śāntarakṣita's *vṛtti*[28] and of the *pañjikā* written by Kamalaśīla. Ichigō has also published an English translation of the MAL verses in the same volume. A few years later, Ichigō co-published with Luis Gómez[29] a revised translation of the MAL verses and a revised commentary on them. As for Mi pham's commentary on the MAL, it is published in *dpe cha* format by rGyal ba Kar ma pa in Sikkim, northern India; and it was published as a modern bound book by the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Varanasi, India in 1999 (here named the Varanasi edition, abbreviated 'V.'), and by Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang Publishers, Chengdu, China in 1992 (here named the Chengdu edition, abbreviated 'C.'). In addition, it has also been published by Zhe chen Monastery in Baudhnath, Nepal, although that edition was not consulted for the present study. It is of incidental interest to note that the significant number of editions of Mi pham's commentary published by rNying ma institutions reflect the interest in the MAL in contemporary rNying ma studies and also, it has to be said, the great esteem in which Mi pham himself is held.

The translations included in this study, as well as those in the Appendices, are my own unless otherwise stated. Transliteration of the Tibetan follows the Wylie system, except for the names of contemporary Tibetan scholars who publish under a Romanised name, where the Romanised name has been used.

I.3.2 Oral sources

In addition, several oral sources of information have been referred to in the course of this study. Tibetan historians in the medieval period based their written accounts partly on

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[28]In Tsong kha pa's view, the *vṛtti* and the so-called root verses were written at the same time, as alternating sections of poetry and prose. The auto-commentary was not composed after the main text, as is often the case. The *vṛtti* should therefore be regarded as an integral part of the MAL. This is reported by lCang skya in Lopez (1987:250-1).

[29]*Studies in the Literature of the Great Vehicle: three Mahāyāna Buddhist texts*, ed. Luis O. Gómez and Jonathan A. Silk, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1989, pp.151-225.

oral sources. Mi pham himself relied partly on oral sources for his biographical presentation of Śāntarakṣita. And in the present day, this research has benefitted from two direct sources of oral information. The first is a series of talks on the MAL given by mKhan chen Pad ma shes rab[30] at the Centre d'études de Chanteloube in Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère, France, in June 2000 and May 2001. The second source includes a number of conversations held with Tibetan lamas and *mkhan pos* of several schools, on various occasions when the present author asked questions pertaining to this thesis. Details of these are to be found in the footnotes. In particular, the Sa skya pa scholar 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse rdzong gsar rin po che, and the rNying ma pa scholar Dzi gar Kong sprul rin po che, were especially helpful.

I.4 Hermeneutical issues

Since the use of oral information can be considered problematic, it is necessary to outline the approach adopted here before proceeding. How does one assess the validity and reliability of oral information in religious studies? And in which sense can oral information contribute to knowledge?

The type of oral information that applies in this case relates to objects that can be known by other forms of cognition. It includes, for example, the testimony of Tibetan historians (which is, in part, itself based on the testimony of others). It is considered legitimate to accept such accounts as contributions to knowledge if, and only if, the information they contain agrees with what is already known about the subject through other sources of evidence.[31] Whenever oral sources cannot be verified by these means, they are taken to be

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[30]The abbot responsible for the Study College (*shes grwa*) in the rNying ma monastery of Theg chog rnam drol shes drub dar gye gling near Mysore, south India. He was born in Khams, south-eastern Tibet, and studied the MAL with Dil mgo mkhyen brtse rin po che, and studied Mi pham's commentary to it with mKhan po bsTson 'grus. Dil mgo mkhyen brtse's main teacher was Zhe chen rgyal tsab, who in turn was the main disciple of Mi pham. Such lineages of learning are considered important by Tibetan masters.

[31]This legitimacy can be justified in two distinct ways. On the one hand, these are the criteria used traditionally for assessing the validity of oral teachings in the Mahāyāna, which must never contradict the

either mistaken or inconclusive.

Another form of oral information relevant to this study concerns what J.N. Mohanty (1992:249-259) calls 'supersensible' objects. These are objects that can be apprehended by faculties other than the five senses. Examples include various claims made by Mipham about Śāntarakṣita's spiritual accomplishment but, more importantly, the topic of ultimate truth *(paramārthasatya)* itself. This category of material is problematic because it brings to light significant differences between the academic philosophical reading of a text and what is understood by textual reading within the Buddhist tradition. From the academic point of view, for instance, the reader can accept that certain people assert that '*x*' is the case without needing to know whether or not '*x*' actually is the case.[32] Specifically, here, the reader might accept Śāntarakṣita's assertion that there is an ultimate truth and that this truth can be realized by human beings, and yet in his evaluation of Śāntarakṣita's viewpoint, the reader does not commit him or herself to any belief that this is actually the case. Engagement with the text is intellectual and conceptual. This contrasts with the 'emic' approach whereby it is not considered that a text is read by a disembodied mind, rather reading is a complex encounter between the person taken as a whole and a rich body of knowledge, and leads not only to understanding but to personal experience. Indeed, the avowed purpose of reading—and writing—is soteriological. For example, Śāntarakṣita describes his aim in writing the MAL as follows:

> *If someone who sets out independently to establish the welfare of self and others, understands that everything that is enjoyed merely through a lack of examination of particular existents does not truly exist ultimately, like a reflection in a mirror and so on, then his various emotional and intellectual obscurations will be eliminated.*[33]

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written teachings (point made by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse rdzong gsar rin po che). On the other hand, the American philosopher Ernest Sosa also adopts these criteria to assess valid testimony. See his entry under 'testimony' in *A Companion to Epistemology*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992. So does J.N. Mohanty in *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought*, pp.249-259.

[32]*Path to the Middle: the spoken scholarship of Kensur Yeshey Tupden* by Anne C. Klein, State University of New York Press, 1994, pp.1-28.

[33]MALV on verse 1; Ichigō (1985:14). bdag dang gzhan gyi don phun sum tshogs pa bsgrub par ci la 'ang ma rag par chas pa/ dngos po'i rnam pa ma brtags gcig pu na dga' ba ma lus pa gzugs brnyan la sogs pa lta

There is a significant difference, then, between the academic and traditional understandings of reader involvement, and this is connected with the complex intertwining of written knowledge and orality within Buddhism that has been extensively discussed by Anne Klein.[34] The distinction between approaches is important here because if, as all Mādhyamikas would agree, the ultimate truth *(paramārthasatya)* is beyond words and non-conceptual, then how is the academic reader to understand the meaning of the term from a purely conceptual or logical standpoint, without himself successfully engaging in the meditation practices that are said to lead to non-conceptual and ultimate understanding? And how, more specifically, is one to assess the idea of discursive and non-discursive modes of ultimate truth?

Such hermeneutical questions are addressed by the four reliances or refuges *(pratisaraṇa)*, one of the most commonly cited frameworks in Buddhist hermeneutics set out in the *Catuḥpratisaraṇasūtra.*[35] The last two reliances are relevant here: to rely on the definitive meaning *(nītārtha)* not on the interpretable meaning *(neyārtha)*, and to rely on wisdom *(jñāna)* not on ordinary consciousness *(vijñāna)*. The Buddhist truths are the object of a threefold wisdom[36] *(prajñā)* arising from listening *(śrutimayī)*, reflection *(cintāmayī)* or meditation *(bhāvanāmayī)* and since the first two are considered worldly and defiled, leading only to an understanding of the interpretable meaning *(neyārtha)*, the third is the only wisdom that offers direct comprehension of the definitive meaning *(nītārtha)*. Within the terms of Buddhist doctrine, therefore, only a reader who has developed this third wisdom *(jñāna)* is able to fully understand what is meant by the term *paramārthasatya*. This implies that the academic approach necessarily means not merely

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bur/ yang dag par na rang bzhin med par rtogs na nyon mongs pa dang/ shes bya'i sgrib pa mtha' dag spong bar 'gyur te/

[34]op.cit.

[35]See 'The Assessment of Textual Interpretation in Buddhism' by Etienne Lamotte, in *Buddhist Hermeneutics* ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr., Kuroda Institute, Hawaii, 1988, p.11ff.

[36]One of the scriptural sources for this distinction is Chapter 8 of the *Saṁdhinirmocana Sūtra* (Dharma Publishing edition, 1995, pp.182-3).

that the reader is not bound to accept that '*x*' actually is the case, but that he or she is in fact unable to determine whether '*x*' is the case or not.

It is precisely because all ordinary human beings, and not just the ubiquitous academic, fall into this category that textual interpretation is difficult. As Donald Lopez (1988:51) puts it, "How is the unenlightened exegete to know the enlightened mind of the Buddha?" One option is to rely on Buddha's own instructions on textual interpretation, such as the four reliances already mentioned. Another is to rely on the *process* of understanding that unfolds during the course of a textual commentary *(gzhung khrid)* given orally by a master. Such occasions (Klein, 1994:1-28) combine reference to textual commentaries; ritual oral elements such as chanting, praying, reciting from memory, and scriptural transmission *(lung; āgama)*; the listener's non-verbal interiority of concentration and visualisation; and the transformative power of the master's speech, which stems above all from his kindness.[37] All these factors coalesce to give 'reading' a very different meaning from the one it has in modern academia, and are said to facilitate the reader's access to non-conceptual understandings unknown by him or her hitherto.

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[37]On this Klein (1994:7, n.24) refers to the rNying ma scholar kLong chen rab 'byams, and his *man ngag rin po che'i mdzod* published by rDo grub chen rin po che, Gangtok, Sikkim, c.1969, vol.5, 56b.2.

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PART ONE

CONTEXTUALIZING THE WORK OF ŚĀNTARAKṢITA AND MI PHAM

CHAPTER TWO THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ŚĀNTARAKṢITA

II.1 Introduction

If one is to have as complete an understanding as possible of Śāntarakṣita's philosophy, and in particular an appreciation of why certain questions were important to him, then it is relevant to begin by reviewing the context within which he was working. This has been separated into two parts to facilitate the presentation. In this Chapter, his socio-historical context will be considered, including elements of his biography. Then Chapter III will review his philosophical context, that is, Śāntarakṣita's place within the history of the philosophy of ideas in India. Taken together, these two Chapters set the scene for subsequent discussion of his views.

The principal reason for engaging in contextual questions here is that so little has been published on Śāntarakṣita and his period that it is important to fill this gap in our knowledge. What has been published is widely scattered between different works, and for the most part embedded in studies that are not focused on him. The value of these two Chapters is arguably that they gather together material that is dispersed in such a way as to constitute the beginnings of a monograph on Śāntarakṣita, and to lay the foundation for further academic research.

The exercise of situating Śāntarakṣita within his historical context should in no way be seen as indicating a materialist approach to ideas or to people. It is not to say that Śāntarakṣita's views were determined by socio-political factors.[1] However, it does reflect the idea that historical events were factors amongst others, all of which came together to produce Śāntarakṣita the person and the thinker. This is entirely compatible with the prin-

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[1]This view was expressed by Marx and Engels. "In every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch". *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in *The Essential Left* (Allen and Unwin, 1960:12).

ciple of interdependent origination *(pratītyasamutpāda)* according to which events arise as a result of the dynamic convergence of many different and complex factors. A contextual approach is also necessary when it comes to reading an 8th century text through the lens of subsequent commentaries. As we will find in Chapter III, some differences between commentarial interpretations result from the historico-philosophical contexts relative to each commentary. Only by establishing an understanding of the context in which the MAL was written will we be able to identify which points in the commentaries relate to topics that were issues for the commentator but not for Śāntarakṣita himself.

II.2 The socio-economic background

The biographical information available on Śāntarakṣita, such as it is,[2] associates him with northeastern India, since he was born in the region of Bengal and became abbot of Nālandā. A few centuries before him, under the Gupta empire[3] that lasted from 320 C.E. to 500 C.E. and extended over the entire span of northern India, from east to west, there was a flourishing of Hindu Sanskrit literature and even a revival of the Vedic horse sacrifice.[4] By comparison, then, Buddhism underwent a relative weakening in that period, and financial support of the monasteries was more dependent on rich citizens than on royal patronage. Gupta dominance was brought to an end by the Huns, and although they did not rule for long they left a far-reaching legacy. They effectively destroyed the Gupta empire in the northwest, including the cities and trading centres where classical culture was eradicated. In particular, the Buddhist monasteries in the Hun territory (this included Punjab, Kashmir, Rajasthan and western parts of modern Uttar Pradesh) were severely affected and never recovered. The sixth century therefore witnessed the first significant assault on Buddhist institutions in northern India.

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[2]See later in this Chapter.
[3]For the historical background, this study is particularly indebted to Kulke and Rothermund (1986,1990, 1998), chapters 2 and 3.
[4]ibid., p.82.

The ancient period[5] ended with the break-up of the vast Indian empires and the establishment of regional kingdoms in northeast, north, central and south India. These were characteristic of early medieval India, when there was a relatively peaceful balance of power between these main regions until the 12th century. In the north, King Harṣa (known as Śrī Harṣadeva; 606-647) re-established an empire almost as great as that of the Guptas, and under him the royal court once again bestowed patronage to both Hindu and Buddhist institutions. Then, in about 711, the first attempts at Arab invasion began in the northwest, and Lalitādītya of Kashmir is reputed to have successfully repelled them from Sind and parts of the Punjab at that time. Generally, the regional balance of power fostered political stability within India itself, and cultural life developed on a regional basis. In northeastern India, for example, where Śāntarakṣita was born, the Pāla dynasty (770-1120)[6] played an important role in strengthening Buddhist institutions weakened by several centuries of Hindu dominance. It is in this region that many Buddhist holy sites are located, as well as Nālandā university itself, so Pāla support was particularly effective for the development of Buddhism. It was under Dharmapāla (c.790-821) that the monastery of Vikramaśilā was founded. Nālandā flourished as a study centre especially for monks from southeast Asia, while Vikramaśilā attracted Tibetan monks who translated Sanskrit texts in collaboration with Indian scholars.[7] The style of early Tibetan Buddhist art, notably *thang ka* painting, shows signs of Pāla influence[8] and may be considered circumstantial evidence to support the claim that Śāntarakṣita was from northeastern India.

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[5]There are several different ways of classifying the periods in Indian history. Here, we define the ancient period as that which began with the Aryan invasions and ended with the collapse of the Gupta empire. This is followed by the medieval period (so Śāntarakṣita lived in the middle of the medieval period) which ends when the Mughal empire rises. That marks the beginning of the modern period.

[6]The dates of Gopāla, the dynasty's founder, and his successor Dharmapāla, vary from source to source. Sumpa, cited by Chattopadyaya (1967,1996: 230), gives Gopāla's year of succession as 750, and that of Dharmapāla as 770.

[7]Kulke and Rothermund, op.cit., p.112.

[8]Early Tibetan art, that is, the art that developed in the period of the first diffusion, evolved primarily from two sources: the Pāla kingdom of eastern India, including the art of neighbouring Nepal, and the Kashmiri region to the west. Most examples were destroyed during the decade of China's cultural revolution in the 1960s and early 1970s, although evidence remains at Sha lu and Dra thang monasteries. See *Art of Tibet* by Robert E. Fisher, Thames and Hudson, London, 1997, pp.127-30.

Tāranātha (fol. 105a) asserts that Śāntarakṣita clearly lived sometime between king Gopāla and king Dharmapāla. He was reportedly already a scholar under Gopāla, which may mean that the reigns of these kings specifically span his adulthood. If, as this reference suggests, his years of activity coincided with the beginnings of the Pāla dynasty, this indicates that Śāntarakṣita studied, debated, taught and wrote at a time when Buddhism was unequivocally supported by the kings. One can infer from this that the material circumstances in which he found himself, both personally as a member of the royal family of Zahor, and more generally, would have been conducive to the pursuit of a scholarly and contemplative life on the part of a Buddhist follower. Generally, he would not have encountered institutional opposition.

Hinduism had been flourishing widely in the period immediately before the Pālas, and in the 7th and 8th centuries it continued to flourish especially in south India. This period saw the magnificent Hindu rock temples to Śiva carved out at Badami, Mahabalipuram and Kanchipuram thanks to the patronage of the Pallava dynasty. Śāntarakṣita would therefore have found that there were many Hindu scholars around him who were worthy opponents in debate. In the northeastern region, in particular, they would surely not have relinquished their favoured position without contest. Such was the situation, then, that overall both Hindu and Buddhist traditions were still strong and their respective views were hotly debated, such debates being the intellectual and cultural mirror of the surrounding changes in political influence. Śāntarakṣita's reputation for excelling in debating skills would consequently have been a very significant strength in this context.

Despite these many favourable circumstances, however, his was not really a 'golden age' in the sense that the first signs were already evident that the Buddhist era in India was coming to an end. The break-up of the great early empires that heralded the early medi-

eval period in around 500 was the first sign of weakness. The invasions by the Huns and then by the Muslims were shortlived, and in Śāntarakṣita's lifetime may not have seemed significant, but with hindsight we know, of course, that repeated Muslim invasions over the following centuries were to contribute to the disappearance of Buddhism altogether in its homeland. So although there may have been relative peace and stability in Śāntarakṣita's time, the 8th century could be seen as a turning point: the beginning of the end of medieval culture. In fact, it is on account of later political developments in India that the Sanskrit texts of authors after Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are for the most part no longer extant.

Having said this, it is important to differentiate between what was happening in the north/ northwest, and the situation prevailing in the northeast. In the 8th century, the northeast did not suffer from any foreign invasions. In the area governed by the Pāla kings, Buddhism continued to expand and develop, as the building of major new monasteries like Vikramalaśilā shows. For Śāntarakṣita and his contemporaries, this particular period would have been a time of confidence and optimism. But in the broader picture of things, even in the northeast, the fortunes of Buddhism were tied to the monarchies.[9]

That the atmosphere under the Pālas was confident and optimistic for Buddhists is consistent with the encyclopaedic nature of Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha.* Works as detailed and as large as this take time to compose, which generally presupposes a stable environment. The nature of this work also assumes a broad and lively context of debates and interaction between scholars, for which we have separate evidence.[10] Furthermore, the TS is testimony that Buddhist scholars took their opponents seriously, arguing the minutiae

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[9]Reat (1994:77).

[10]Tāranātha, for instance, reports stories of many debates in this period.

of different topics as well as representing their opponents' views fairly.[11] This is consistent with the general picture of a subcontinent where both Hindus and Buddhists enjoyed political protection in equal measure at different times and in different places. There were no clear favourites. The situation was conducive to mutual respect.

Finally, as mentioned above, the 8th century marked in certain respects the beginning of the end for Buddhism in India. Śāntarakṣita came in the last period[12] of the development of Indian Buddhism, and the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis he elaborated was the final doctrinal development of Indian Mahāyāna.[13] He was able to build on a legacy of around 1,200 years of Buddhist thought and religious practice. Even more important was the fact that, as far as we are aware, most schools of Indian Buddhism[14] were still actively followed by adherents in his lifetime. So although historical presentations of Indian Buddhism speak variously of 'the early schools' and later developments according to their respective dates of origin, if one takes a synchronic slice of Buddhist life in the 8th century one finds these traditions present simultaneously.[15] This means that the philosophical questions that Śāntarakṣita addressed were live ones, and not merely of academic interest as they came to be in Tibet. The proponents of other views with whom he debated actually believed in those views and did not adopt positions merely for the sake of debate.

Now, if one considers briefly the broader context of the 8th century Buddhist world,

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[11]Nakamura (1983:221). "The theories of other schools which are presented in it [the TS] are so rich in variety and accurate in their descriptions that it is a valuable source material for the research on the history of Indian thought."

[12]In *A Short History of Buddhism*, Conze divides the history of Buddhism in India into three 500-year periods, the last of which is from 500-1000 CE. Noble Ross Reat (1994), on the other hand, divides periods differently: first the period to Aśoka, the ascendency of Buddhism from 250 BCE to 250 CE, the classical age from 250 to 500 CE, and the medieval period from 500 to 1000 CE. However the history is analysed, Śāntarakṣita always falls in the last period before Buddhism's decline.

[13]"In the history of the Madhyamaka school the last quarter of the first millennium was...the period of the great development and glory of the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis." Ruegg (1981:85).

[14]See André Bareau (1955), *Les sectes bouddhiques du petit véhicule*; and Etienne Lamotte (1958), *Histoire du bouddhisme indien.*

[15]Conze, for example, in his *Buddhist Thought in India* speaks of 'archaic Buddhism' which can be misconstrued as Buddhism belonging exclusively to an early period.

that is the entire area to which Mahāyāna Buddhism had spread inside and outside the Indian subcontinent, once again it is clear that this was a time of enormous change. Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla belong to the last generation of Indian Buddhists who were in contact with their Chinese counterparts. After them, Chinese and Indian Buddhism diverged and no more Sanskrit works were translated into Chinese (apart from Tantric texts).[16] Indeed, neither the TS nor the MAL were ever translated into Chinese. In 845 Buddhism was severely repressed by the Chinese authorities, and this is commonly regarded as the beginning of Buddhism's decline in that country.[17] One of the factors behind the cessation of communication between China and India after the 8th century was the situation prevailing in Central Asia, where Hsuan-tsang[18] reports that by the 7th century many Buddhist monasteries in Sogdiana, Bactria and Gandhāra were in ruins. Western Turks in the Takla Makan area were converted to Islam by the mid-8th century, and thereafter cultural contacts overland between India and China came to an end.[19] By contrast, Tibet had become a major Central Asian power, and had become interested in Buddhism as a result of conquering the surrounding Buddhist lands of Kucha, Khotan, and the Takla Makan. During the reign of Khri srong lde brtsan (742-798) Tibetan dominance was at its height—that is, of course, during the lifetime of Śāntarakṣita. So the overall picture that presented itself to Śāntarakṣita must have been that Buddhism was on the wane in India, China and Central Asia, but (possibly) on the rise in Tibet. If one sets Śāntarakṣita's achievements against this backdrop, and considers the role he probably played in Tibet, one might imagine that he was singularly far-sighted.

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[16]Nakamura (1983:257).
[17] 'Buddhism in China' by Erik Zurcher in Reat (1987:143-44).
[18]*Buddhist Records of the Western World* transl. Samuel Beal, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1994, pp.98, 222-223.
[19]Snellgrove (1987:328).

II.3 Śāntarakṣita's lifestory

Mi pham begins his commentary on the MAL with a brief biography of Śāntarakṣita. The interest of Mi pham's account stems largely from the fact that no comprehensive accounts of his life existed prior to this. Historical facts concerning his life are poorly documented, and as a result the information pointing to his place within the history of Buddhist ideas is circumstantial. More can be learned from studying his works than from looking at his biography. Nevertheless, as an attempt at gathering together the written and oral sources on Śāntarakṣita that existed in the 19th century, Mi pham's biography affords an opportunity to take a critical look at traditional accounts of his lifestory, and to assess the differing views regarding the role Śāntarakṣita played in establishing Buddhism in Tibet.

II.3.1 Accounts of Śāntarakṣita in Tibetan history

As mentioned in Chapter I, Śāntarakṣita presents something of a paradox. On the one hand, he was honoured by Tibetan historians such as Bu ston (1290-1364),[20] the Sa skya pa 'Gos lo tsa ba (1392-1481)[21] and the Jo nang pa Tāranātha (1575-?)[22] as one of the founding fathers of Buddhism in their country. Furthermore, his doctrinal achievement is acknowledged in Tibetan doxographies[23] as particularly significant, since he is recognized as the founder of the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka *(rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma rang rgyud pa)* school. In contrast to this prominence, studies on his work in the Indo-Tibetan commentarial literature are relatively scant, and Tāranātha, whose history *(rgya gar chos 'byung)* benefited in part from written Indian sources, tells us

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[20]*The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (chos 'byung by Bu ston) translated by E. Obermiller, Institut für Buddhismus-Kundc, Hcidclbcrg, 1931-2.
[21]*The Blue Annals* (*deb ther sngon po* by 'Gos lo tsa ba) translated by George N. Roerich, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1949, reprinted 1996.
[22]*History of Buddhism in India* (rgya gar chos 'byung by Tāranātha) translated by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadyaya, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1970, reprinted 1997.
[23]See, for example, *Cutting Through Appearances: practice and theory of Tibetan Buddhism* by Geshe Lhundrup Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins, Snow Lion, New York, 1989, p.283-4; D.S. Ruegg, *Autour du lTa ba'i khyad par de Ye shes sde*, JA Tome CCLXIX, 1981, p.217; and *blo gsal grub mtha'* translated by K. Mimaki, Université de Kyoto, 1982, Chap. XII, fol.100b5, pp.172-3.

extremely little about his life.[24]

Śāntarakṣita is not unique, of course, in having some importance within the history of Buddhism and yet being little understood in terms of his lifestory. Nāgārjuna is a prime example of this. In the specific case of Śāntarakṣita, the difficulty one faces in trying to unravel some of the connections stems largely from the fact that most of our sources on him date from many centuries after his death, and contemporaneous evidence to corroborate them, where extant, is largely unresearched. It has to be said that Karmay, Kvaerne, Houston, Ruegg, Snellgrove, Tucci and other scholars have, in recent times, each made invaluable contributions to this area of research. For example, Snellgrove[25] has shown how the Indian traditions of Buddhism, primarily represented in early Tibet by Śāntarakṣita, were only one of several sources of influence that converged to form the Buddhism of Tibet. Karmay[26], Houston[27], Demiéville[28], Ruegg[29] and Tucci[30] have each translated contemporaneous documents from Tibetan or Chinese, which throw light on the doctrinal views of the period, including those around the bSam yas debates. Karmay[31], Kvaerne[32], Snellgrove[33] and Tucci[34] have also undertaken extensive studies of the religious practices that pre-existed the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet.

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[24]Tāranātha (fol. 139A) gives as his key Indian sources the *magadha'i paṇḍita sa dbang bzang po* (Kṣemendrabhadra of Magadha), thc *Buddhapurāṇa* composcd by Indradatta *(dbang pos byin)*, and a historical chronology by the Hindu scholar Bhaṭaghaṭi.

[25]*Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan successors* by David Snellgrove, Shambhala, Boston, 1987.

[26]*The Great Perfection* by Samten Gyaltsen Karmay, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1988.

[27]*Sources for a History of the bSam yas Debate* by G.W. Houston, Monumenta Tibetica Historica I.2, VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, Sankt Augustin, 1980.

[28]*Le Concile de Lhasa* by Paul Demiéville, Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, Paris, 1952, reprinted 1987

[29]*Autour du lTa ba'i khyad par de Ye shes sde,* by D. Seyfort Ruegg, in JA CCLXIX, 1981, pp.207-229.

[30]*Minor Buddhist Texts II: the debate at bSam yas according to Tibetan sources*, by G. Tucci, ISMEO, Rome, 1958. Also *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma: Tibetan Chronicles*, translated by G. Tucci, ISMEO, Rome, 1971.

[31]*The Treasury of Good Sayings: a Tibetan history of Bon*, edited and translated by Samten G. Karmay, Oxford University Press, London, 1972.

[32]*The 'Great Perfection' in the Tradition of the Bonpos* by Per K. Kvaerne, in *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet,* ed. Lai, Whalen and Lewis R. Lancaster, Asian Humanities Press, Berkeley, 1983, pp.367-92.

[33]*The Nine Ways of Bon: excerpts from gZi brjid*, by David L. Snellgrove, London Oriental Series, 18, Oxford University Press, London, 1967.

[34]*The Religions of Tibet* by G. Tucci, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1980; University of California Press, Berkeley, 1980.

Concern about the lack of evidence to corroborate the histories has meant that most scholars have avoided the topic of Śāntarakṣita's lifestory. One study on Śāntarakṣita, the thesis by Kennard Lipman written in 1979, examines the MAL but does not provide any historical background on Śāntarakṣita himself. Similarly, *A Study of Svātantrika* by Donald Lopez Jr. examines various aspects of Śāntarakṣita's doctrine but does not deal with historical questions. The main exception to this is the account given by Alaka Chattopadhyaya in Chapter 25 of *Atīśa and Tibet.*[35] This is the most comprehensive account in Western literature to date and attempts to make a coherent and broadly chronological narrative of Śāntarakṣita's life on the basis of Tibetan histories. Unfortunately, as some scholars[36] have noted, the author is not critical of her sources and takes many assertions at face-value. The result is a fair summary of the picture painted by Tibetan historians of the 13th century onwards, but it does not examine the relationship between these 'histories' and events in the 8th century, by way, for example, of a comparison of the histories and contemporary Indian, Tibetan or Chinese documents. Other scholars have, in turn, accepted Chattopadhyaya's account at face-value, and it serves as the basis for the entry under 'Śāntarakṣita' in Eliade's *Encyclopedia of Religions.*

Let us cite two passages from Chattopadhyaya to illustrate the type of problem that occurs for the modern scholar. In the opening paragraph of this chapter, she cites the accounts of Tibetan historians which say that Śāntarakṣita's "preaching of Buddhism there [in Tibet] stirred up great resistance: the devils and demi-gods of the country were in revolt." This has the flavour of a legendary account, and does not provide us with a critical picture of what actually happened. In the context, it can be taken as the popular interpretation given to the epidemics, flooding and lightning that struck the country at this time, but it

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[35]First published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, in 1967, reprinted in 1996.

[36]See for example Snellgrove's comment (Snellgrove, 1987:479 n.2): "Alaka Chattopadhyaya's *Atīśa and Tibet* may provide much useful information for the general reader, but the scope of this book extends unhappily beyond the competence of its well-intentioned compiler, who has not always sought the right advice."

does not explain why people should wish to see Śāntarakṣita's actions in an unfavourable light in the first place. Chattopadhyaya (1967:234) continues: "Śāntarakṣita's teachings *must have provoked* the first real resistance to Buddhism in Tibet". The italics are my own and aim to emphasize the speculative nature of her analysis which does not, at any point, refer to historical documents explaining the complex political and religious relationship between Buddhism and the pre-Buddhist religious establishment in Tibet. Nor does it acknowledge extant historical evidence of documented events, such as the fact that Buddhism had been banned in Tibet under Khri srong lde brtsan's father.[37] So Chattopadhyaya's account fails to enlighten us as to the nature, form or extent of the opposition that Śāntarakṣita encountered. A second passage in this same chapter (pp. 242-243) attempts to substantiate the claim that Śāntarakṣita established the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet "in the real sense of the term" (what does this mean?) and was "the first Buddhist *ācārya* in the classical sense of the term who worked effectively for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet". In support of this claim, Chattopadhyaya quotes in full the related passage from 'Gos lo tsa ba which, she says, contains a "realistic" account of the history of Tibetan religion between the 6th and 8th centuries C.E. The passage cited starts by asserting that Srong btsan sgam po was a Buddhist practitioner, a claim that is questioned by modern scholars for lack of evidence. Finally, it is quite unclear what criteria she is using to accept the Tibetan histories as "realistic", especially as many of the details on which they are based—such as the falling of the Buddhist scriptures from heaven on to the roof of the royal palace at the time of Tho tho ri gnyan btsan—are far from being realistic in our own cultural terms. The resulting narrative is peppered with unsubstantiated claims, and sits uncomfortably between the fantastical and the historical, blurring uncritically the limits of each.

The most recent book to appear on Śāntarakṣita is that by Marie-Louise Friquegnon

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[37]Snellgrove (1987:410-411).

which devotes seven pages to "the life and lineage" of Śāntarakṣita.[38] Her account is equally disappointing, based as it is on an uncritical re-telling of the classic Tibetan narrative with virtually no literary references.

So why is it prudent to be wary of the Tibetan histories? Every historian operates within his or her own cultural or ideological perspective, whether consciously or unconsciously, so is Tibetan history fundamentally different from any other? In the specific case of Tibet, there are several reasons for caution. The first was mentioned above, and relates to historical circumstance. Tibet entered recorded history only in the 7th century C.E.[39] so little systematic written documentation existed for the period immediately prior to Śāntarakṣita's arrival. It is therefore almost impossible to substantiate the claimed uniqueness of his contribution. Although written records were made in the 8th century, many were reportedly destroyed during the persecution period around gLang dar ma, in the 9th century, so were not available to historians in the medieval period. Indeed, as a result of recent textual discoveries such as those in Dun Huang[40] modern scholars may have more early documentation at their disposal than did their medieval Tibetan counterparts. On the other hand, it should be noted that modern scholars no longer have access to a great number of documents previously held in monastic libraries in Tibet, and that were destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. Thus the general situation regarding documentary evidence is particularly difficult.

In the case of Bu ston, for instance, Obermiller (1931:4-5) notes written source texts for most parts of his *History*, but not for the eighth section which deals with the history of

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[38]*On Shantarakshita* by Marie-Louise Friquegnon, Wadsworth Philosophical Series, Thomson Learning, Belmont, California, 2001.
[39]Snellgrove (1987), p.381.
[40]See Bacot (1940, Ruegg (1981), Houston (1980), Tucci (1958) et al. It should be noted that many of the Dun Huang discoveries have recently been found to be forgeries (reported in the *Newsletter of the International Dun-huang Project* (IDP), British Library, April 2002), although this problem appears only to concern Chinese and not Tibetan texts, so the authenticity of the texts cited here is not in doubt.

Buddhism in Tibet. This points to an account that is largely based on traditional oral stories. And in the case of Tāranātha, the written sources acknowledged by the author[41] include "many fragmentary narrations as well as compilations of the history of the Doctrine" in Tibetan, but nothing he considers "chronologically complete", as well as the Indian sources mentioned above which include chronologies relating to Śāntarakṣita's period. 'Gos lo tsa ba referred to a wide range of written material available in his time including Tibetan Royal Chronicles, Tibetan translations of Chinese annals, local monastic annals, the biographies *(rnam thar)* of Tibetan religious teachers, the *Red Annals (deb ther dmar po),*[42] and the *Affirmation of sBa (sba bzhad),*[43] a chronicle written in the 9th century. As a result his *Blue Annals* establish a chronology that is invaluable, and which has served as a source of reference for other histories including Tāranātha's.

From the above, it is clear that Tibetans are far from being incompetent in the art of history. In fact, as Tucci[44] argues, Tibetans followed Chinese rather than Indian tradition, and showed particular interest in recording facts, as testified by the annals discovered in Dun Huang.[45] Criticism of Tibetan history as "a simplification or rather rationalization"[46] of events therefore appears rather harsh. It may be more balanced to argue that Tibetans simply had a different notion of history to that of modern historians. Their objectives and concerns were religious, and explicitly so, as can be seen from the titles of the respective works, and this manifestly influenced their identification and selection of 'facts'. The modern concept of history as a record of socio-politico-economic facts and events was unfamiliar to them.

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[41]op.cit., pp.350-1. See note 24 above.
[42]*Deb ther dmar po gsar ma: Tibetan Chronicles,* transl G. Tucci, ISMEO, Romc, 1971.
[43]Passages of this document are quoted in Snellgrove (1987).
[44]*Tibetan Painted Scrolls* by G. Tucci, La Libreria dello Stato, Rome, 1949. Reprinted by Rinsen Book Co. Ltd.,Kyoto, 1980. Vol.1, pp.139-150.
[45]*Documents de Touen houang relatifs à l'histoire du Tibet: Annales 650-747,* transl. J. Bacot, F.W. Thomas and Ch.Toussaint, Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1940-46.
[46]Snellgrove (1987:427).

In other words, Bu ston's concern, and that of all Tibetan historians, was to write a religious history of religion. John Powers (1995:121-2) makes the point that Tibetans actually saw the history of their country *as* a history of religion, "as a record of the gradual triumph of Buddhist dharma over the indigenous forces opposing it". Any attempt to unravel "historical truth" from these accounts will inevitably meet with frustration. Powers adopts what is arguably one of the best approaches in the circumstances, namely valuing the Tibetan histories for informing us about "what Tibetans *believe* about their history and how these beliefs reflect and influence their world view". Herbert Guenther is far less accommodating, and adopts an extreme view about these beliefs, seeing them as antithetical to reason.

> *Historians of Tibet (like many historians) were absolute falsifiers of facts. Having a bias for their particular point of view, they wrote Tibetan history in a way which makes Tibet appear as uncouth and savage, and they continued saying that there was no civilization in Tibet before Buddhism came.*[47]

The difficulty with this view is knowing exactly what is meant by 'a fact'. John Powers' solution is based on the idea that there are different sorts of 'truths', and Tibetan historians reveal a great deal about the 'truth' of how they view their own history. In this sense, the views of Powers and Guenther are compatible. However, this leaves us with a relativism that is unsatisfactory. Is it not unnecessarily restrictive to assert that Tibetan historians reveal only a Tibetan cultural view of developments? In other words, that what we learn about are the characteristics of the Tibetan cultural lens rather than the events that are being viewed? Whatever its deficiencies, Tibetan history is no more relative than any other, and interweaves references to substantiated historical events with the religious and cultural beliefs of its people.[48]

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[47]*Early Forms of Tibetan Buddhism* by Herbert Guenther, in Crystal Mirror III, Dharma Publishing, Berkeley, 1974, pp.80-92.

[48]Indeed, this is also the case for the history of Buddhism in India. See, for example, *The Life of Buddha as legend and history* by Edward J. Thomas, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1993. European medieval histories, too, reflect strongly the worldview of the time.

It is ironical that although history was seen by Tibetans as being about religion, and as being mainly for the purpose of reinforcing religious belief, at the same time it was not considered of significant value in the body of Tibetan literature as a whole.[49] This is because it is not credited with soteriological value, and, as has been noted by several scholars, for Buddhists the true purpose of all knowledge is to bring liberation.[50] So the weakness of history's soteriological value can perhaps help to account for the Tibetans' relaxed attitude towards historical (in)accuracy.

For all these reasons, the approach taken here is a phenomenological one. This is not to be understood in the Husserlian sense of stripping away cultural and other presuppositions so as to describe the bare phenomena of lived experience prior to reflection. Rather, it means that what is being investigated is what appears to us when we perceive the 'world' of Tibetan history rather than the world that so appears.[51]

II.3.2 Śāntarakṣita and the legend of Padmasambhava

It is relevant to acknowledge briefly here the link between the biography of Śāntarakṣita and the lifestory of Padmasambhava. This link raises many issues for modern scholars, who tend to consider that the legend of Padmasambhava was constructed by rNying ma pas especially from the 13th century onwards as a means of countering the dominance of the New Translation (g*Sar ma*) schools.[52] In other words, Padmasambhava's lifestory is seen as self-conscious myth, not as history—not even as history in a Tibetan sense. This issue is significant insofar as it can be claimed that the role of Śāntarakṣita himself was constructed as part of this myth.

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[49]For example, history plays very little part in the monastic curriculum.
[50]Klein (1986:1); Radhakrishnan (1923,1996:24ff). It is important to note that this does not imply that soteriological concerns are absent from European thinking. Philosophers like Saint Anselm, Thomas Aquinas and Descartes pursued philosophy and knowledge as a way of understanding God. The relationship between knowledge and liberation lies at the heart of many religions.
[51]See S. Guttenplan, *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind* (1994:471).
[52]Snellgrove (1987:397).

ILLUSTRATION 1

Śāntarakṣita and the legend of Padmasambhava

Still today, the rNying ma school in exile maintains the tradition of a sacred dance re-enacting the conversion of Tibet by Padmasambhava, and depicting him in his 'eight manifestations'. The photograph above shows an image of Padmasambhava in the centre, flanked to his right by Khri srong lde brstan and to his left by Śāntarakṣita. Both the latter are represented by lamas wearing masks and elaborate costumes who will take part in the dance. Dordogne, France, summer 1998.

Photo: Raphaelle Demandre.

This question in fact shows that Tibetan history is not straightforwardly about how Tibetans view events, because Tibetans themselves hold differing views about their own history. Scepticism concerning the extent of Padmasambhava's role in introducing Buddhism to Tibet is a view held by some dGe lugs pas, while rNying ma pas hold the view that he was central to the process. Similarly, scepticism concerning the authenticity of *gter ma* 'treasure texts' in general, and those that relate Padmasambhava's lifestory in particular, is shared by some dGe lugs pas, but rNying ma pas have no doubts about the principle of *gter ma* texts.

Snellgrove has argued the opposite—that the dGe lugs pa view is itself based on a self-conscious attempt to emphasize Tibet's connections with Indian Buddhism to the detriment of Central Asian and Chinese influences and, in this process, to diminish the role played by Padmasambhava.

> *The less coherent accounts as preserved by the later rNying ma and Bon compilers of supposedly ancient traditions, give a truer impression of that earlier period than the more simplified version, which came to be generally accepted by Tibetan historical writers, of the new schools, established as part of the second diffusion of Buddhism, when the whole bias was in favor of teachings imported direct from India.*[53]

It is beyond the scope of this study to examine in detail the arguments in this debate. But it is important to note that scepticism concerning Padmasambhava existed in Tibet itself and is not a modern academic invention; indeed, it is possible that the doubts of modern scholars have been influenced by certain dGe lugs pa mentors. Be that as it may, this study is concerned with a rNying ma commentary on Śāntarakṣita and therefore, while remaining critically aware of the divergent views within Tibetan Buddhism itself, and within the community of scholars, we will proceed on the assumption that the rNying ma school presents an authentic understanding of Buddhism.

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[53]Snellgrove (1987:402).

II.4 Mi pham's biography of Śāntarakṣita

The first quarter of Mi pham's commentary consists of a preliminary introduction to the MAL, divided into five topics[54] *(yan lag lnga)*, namely: 1) the author, 2) for whom the text is composed, 3) what category of teaching it belongs to, 4) its condensed meaning, and 5) the purpose of the text. The first topic, then, is devoted to Śāntarakṣita himself. This in turn is subdivided into five sections: his learned or scholarly life, his monastic vows, his spiritual accomplishments, his human qualities, and his activity. Apparently, Mi pham aims to provide us with as complete a picture of Śāntarakṣita as he was able to paint given the lack of historical substantiation, and he concludes with his own appraisal of the author's historical and doctrinal importance.

Mi pham uses a variety of sources for his account. He quotes passages from the *Mañjuśrī-mūla Tantra*, the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* and the *Samādhirāja Sūtra* to show that prophecies were made about Śāntarakṣita in both sūtras and tantras. He does not explicitly refer to the histories as sources in the main narrative, but a little detective work enables one to trace many details back to Bu ston, Tāranātha, 'Gos lo tsa ba and the *Red Annals.*[55] According to mKhan chen Pad ma shes rab, Mi pham also relied on histories of the rNying ma school, including the *rnam thar* of Padmasambhava, and on traditional oral accounts.[56]

From the structure of this lifestory it is evident that Mi pham did not attempt to compose a *rnam thar,* not even a brief one. *rNam thar*[57] are recognized as a literary form in their own right, and follow a characteristic structure in three parts: outer, inner and secret. The

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[54]There were two main traditions for introducing a text. The tradition of Nālandā was to present it in terms of Five Perfections, and the tradition of Vikramaśilā, followed here, was to explain it in terms of Five Topics. (mKhan chen Pad ma shes rab)

[55]Tucci (1971).

[56]Oral commentary given on Mi pham's commentary to the MAL in Dordogne, France, June 2000.

[57]See *The life of Bu ston Rinpoche* by D. Seyfort Ruegg, ISMEO Rome, no:34, 1966. Also 'On the nature of *rnam thar:* early dge lugs pa siddha biographies' by Janice D. Willis, in *Soundings in Tibetan Civilisation*, ed. Barbara Nimri Aziz and Matthew Kapstein, Manshar Publications, Delhi, 1985, pp.304-319.

outer biography *(phyi'i rnam thar)* covers elements such as birth, schooling, specific teachers and so on. The inner biography *(nang gi rnam thar)* chronicles specific meditation practices, tantric initiations and so on. And the secret biography *(gsang ba'i rnam thar)* recounts activities and achievements from a magical viewpoint. Occasionally a *rnam thar* will focus on only one or two of these elements. Mi pham has not followed this structure in his commentary, although all three elements are present in his narrative. The main points about Śāntarakṣita's life as recounted by Mi pham will now be briefly presented following his five subsections in order.[58]

II.4.1 Introductory

Mi pham's narrative begins as follows.

> *He [Śāntarakṣita] was born the son of the king of the eastern territory of Zahor.*[59] *He received his ordination vows from Jñānagarbha* (Ye shes nying po)*,*[60] *the Sarvastivādin abbot of Nālandā, [when] he was given the name 'Bodhisattva Śāntarakṣita'. He became very learned in every branch of knowledge, and ascended to the rank of abbot of Nālandā.*[61] *He refuted [various] scholars in debate [so that] his reputation for erudition resounded far and wide like a lion's roar.*[62]

Mi pham then provides anecdotal evidence of Śāntarakṣita's great learning, which may be based on the oral tradition.

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[58]The biographical section translated and paraphrased in the following pages of this study ranges from pages 5 to 14 of the Varanasi edition, and pages 22 to 36 of the Chengdu edition.

[59]This claim is not mentioned by Bu ston, Tāranātha or 'Gos lo tsa ba, and there appears no tangible evidence to substantiate it. However, Chattopadhyaya quotes Sumpa's *dpag bsam ljon bzang* (112), ed. S.C. Das, Calcutta, 1908, in support. There is circumstantial evidence linking Śāntarakṣita with Bengal (the Zahor area) since both his teacher Jñānagarbha and the latter's own teacher Śrīgupta are said to have come from Bengal (Tāranātha, fol.99B). The claim is also consistent with the assertion that Śāntarakṣita's sister Mandaravā, a wife of Padmasambhava, was a princess of Zahor. This is found, for example, in *The Lotus-Born* by Yeshe Tsogyal, Shambhala, 1993, p.45, and Chattopadhyaya (op.cit.) p.235, but critics would contend that its inclusion within the rNying ma Padmasambhava *rnam thar* cycle does nothing to commend the claim.

[60]Supported by 'Gos lo tsa ba (Roerich, i.34).

[61]The monastery of which he was abbot is not named by Bu ston, Tāranātha or 'Gos lo tsa ba. On the basis of Sumpa (112) some scholars believe it was Nālandā, while John Powers (1995:128) asserts it was Vikramaśilā. However, in e-mail correspondence with the present author Powers was unable to trace his source(s) for this claim. Sceptics maintain that Śāntarakṣita is linked with Nālandā merely on account of its eminence.

[62]de'ang slob dpon 'di shar phyogs za hor rgyal po'i sras su 'khrungs nas na lan dra'i thams cad yod smra'i ste pa'i mkhan po ye shes snying po las rab tu byung zhing/ mtshan bo dhi sa tva sha nta ra kshi ta shes gsol/ rig pa'i gnas mtha' dag la mkhas par gyur te/ na len dra'i mkhan po mdzad cing rgol ba ngan pa mtha' dag tshar bcad de/ mkhas pa'i grags pa seng ge'i sgra chen pos sa'i steng thams cad khyab par gyur te/ V. p.5.

In South India at that time there lived a brahman who was learned in all the doctrinal tenets of the Tīrthikas, and who had defeated [both] Hindu and Buddhist scholars in debate. Nobody was able to contend with him. He developed the following plan: 'If I went to Nālandā and vanquished the abbot Śāntarakṣita in debate', [he thought,] 'I would be considered unbeatable throughout the land'. [So] he journeyed to the place where Śāntarakṣita lived, but when he got there [the brahmin] did not see the abbot but a seated likeness of Mañjuśrī, shining with the colour of refined gold. He left the room and asked people where Śāntarakṣita was. They replied he was in his room. He returned to the room and saw the abbot in place of what he had seen before. He then realized that nobody could defeat in debate [someone who] had so completely accomplished the supreme deity [i.e. Mañjuśrī]. With tremendous faith, and abandoning all thought of disputation, with devotion he placed [Śāntarakṣita's] foot upon the crown of his head, and entered the wheel of the [Buddhist] teaching. This is just one example of how [Śāntarakṣita] was unparalleled and without a rival.

When he arrived in Tibet [Śāntarakṣita] said to the king, 'If any Buddhist or non-Buddhist wishes to contend, if the contest is to be one of magical powers there is nobody in the world greater than Padmasambhava. Let them contend with him. But if the contest is one of debate, let them debate with me. For at the moment, in all the world, there is no one more learned than myself. Having reduced opposition, we will establish the Buddha's doctrine and the king's wish will be fulfilled.' Such were the words of this learned authority.[63]

This story shows how Śāntarakṣita was respected and appreciated by his peers, who were great scholars in their own right. In addition, the last passage illustrates the unshakeable confidence he had in his own learning, implicitly acknowledged through his willingness to debate. Mi pham concludes this introduction by noting:

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[63]V. p.6-7. de'i tshe lho phyogs nas bram ze mu stegs sogs kyi rig byed mtha' dag la mkhas pa zhig gis phyi nang gnyis ka'i rgol ba rnams pham par byas te sus kyang 'gran mi bzod pa na/ da ni na len drar song la mkhan po zhi ba 'tsho pham par byas na sa steng na 'gran pa'i zla med par 'gyur ro snyam du sems shing/ mkhan po'i bzhugs sar rim gyis 'ongs te bltas pas mkhan po mi snang zhing 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi sku gser btsho ma'i mdog ltar 'bar ba zhig bzhugs par mthong ste phyir 'ongs nas gzhan la dris pas mkhan po de nyid na bzhugs yod zer/ slar log nas bltas pas sngar gyis de na mkhan po bzhugs par mthong bas/ lhag pa'i lha dngos su grub pas sus kyang tsod pas mi thub par shes nas shin tu dad par gyur te rtsod pa'i bsam pa dor nas gus pas zhabs spyi bor blangs te bstan pa'i skor zhugs par gyur pa de lta bu la sogs mkhas pa'i rnam par thar pa 'gran pa'i zla thams cad dang bral zhing/ bod du byon pa'i tshe'ang btsad po la/ gal te sangs rgyas pa'am gzhan par gyur ba su zhig 'gran zla chol ba na/ rdzu 'phrul ni 'dzam bu'i gling na pad ma sam bha va nyid las che ba su yang med pas de dang 'gran du gzhug la/ gtan tshigs ni bdag dang zhags su bkye ba na da lta sa'i steng na kho bo las mkhas pa med pas rgol ba thams cad tshar bcad nas sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa tshugs shing btsad po'i dgongs pa 'grub ces mkhas par bdag nyid kyis kyang zhal gyis bzhes so/

In this way, this master established the chariot of Yogācāra-Madhyamaka.[64] *Of all the* paṇḍita-*s of this tradition, he was like the crest-jewel on a victory banner: clear, sublime and noble. Here are, in brief, [some details] about the life of [this] scholar.*[65]

II.4.2 Scholarship

Mi pham notes that several other great scholars in India adopted the Yogācāra-Svātantrika point of view, including (in Mi pham's order) Haribhadra (Seng ge bzang po: late 8th century), Kamalaśīla (8th century), Abhayākaragupta[66] (c.1100 C.E.), and Dharmamitra[67] (Chos kyi bshes gnyen: c.800 C.E.?). He implies that even amongst these, Śāntarakṣita was the greatest exponent of that school, specifically in the sense that he was the first to expound this view clearly, stating the Yogācāra view in relative truth. Mi pham then names some of those who continued the Yogācāra-Svātantrika tradition in Tibet: rNgog lo chen po,[68] Phya pa chos kyi seng ge,[69] and Rong ston chos rje.[70] rJe Tsong kha pa[71] and his disciples also studied it, he says, and some wrote notes *(zin bris)*[72] on it. Furthermore, when Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182-1251) taught Madhyamaka, he would comment on the MAL. By supplying these details, Mi pham is showing how long-standing was Śāntarakṣita's doctrinal legacy to Tibet, since the heads of Sa skya pa and dGe lugs pa schools assimilated his works. He adds, however, that by the time he was writing, that is, at the end of the 19th century, the tradition of studying and transmitting Śāntarakṣita's teaching was rare, a

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[64] See Chapter IX below.

[65] dc lta bu'i slob dpon 'di nyid kyis dbu ma rnal 'byor spyod pa'i shing rta'i srol phycs shing/ pan di ta thams cad kyi nang na rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo'i tog ltar gsal bar bla na 'phags pa ni mkhas pa'i rnam thar mdo tsam ste/

[66] See *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India* by D. Seyfort Ruegg, pp.114-5.

[67] Ibid., p.95. See also Tāranātha (fol. 99B).

[68] Ngog lo chen po's dates are given as 1059-1109 in the *Blue Annals* (Roerich, i.328). He was a great translator, and abbot of dPal gsang phu monastery.

[69] Referred to as 'Phya pa' in the *Blue Annals* (Roerich, i.332-333), where his dates are given as 1109-69. Like Ngog lo, he was abbot of Ne'u thog (gsang phu) monastery. He composed many treatises including a commentary on the MAL. He was renowned as a logician, and on this see L.W.J. van der Kuip, 'Phya ba chos kyi seng ge's Impact on Tibetan Epistemological Theory', in JIP 5 (1977), pp.355-69.

[70] Presumably Rong ston shes bya kun gzigs (1367-1449). See *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* by Dudjom Rinpoche, p.929.

[71] This is corroborated in the *Presentation of Tenets (grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa)* by the dGe lugs pa scholar lCang skya rol pa'i rdo rje, where he says that the MAL was studied widely in Tibet during the period of the first dissemination and at the time of Atiśa, and that its study continued up to and including Tsong kha pa but was thereafter all but lost. See *A Study of Svātantrika* by Donald Lopez, p.368.

[72] For example, the *dbu ma rgyan gyi zin bris* of Tsong kha pa.

fact that is corroborated by other sources.[73] In conclusion Mi pham says:

> *In brief, those who uphold without partiality the two traditions of Mahāyāna, and in particular those Mādhyamikas who are interested in logic* (pramāṇa; tshad ma)*, will experience a natural delight in entering the tradition of [Śāntarakṣita] the great charioteer.*[74]

To appraise this initial biographical section we should note that the content is consistent with passages in several other extant sources. This, however, is a rather circular comment since Mi pham's account was based on these works; it indicates only that Mi pham was faithful to his sources. The following is an example of the type of corroboration we find. Although they offer no direct evidence of his debating skills, the *Blue Annals* highlight Śāntarakṣita's predilection for reasoning and logic. When the Tibetan ministers are sent to sound out Śāntarakṣita before inviting him to Tibet, they ask him what his doctrine is. "My doctrine is to follow whatever was proved correct after examining it by reason, and to avoid all that does not agree with reason," he is said to have replied.[75] In addition, there is evidence[76] that debating was a common practice at this time which makes it likely that he was a debater, added to which his main disciple Kamalaśīla is known to have been regarded as an outstanding debater. By way of corroboration for his learning and scholarship, one should also note the composition of the TS itself, which is an exhaustive compendium of all the philosophical views in India at that time.

There is one particular point in this part of Mi pham's account that has been questioned in other contexts, and that is the idea that Śāntarakṣita's fame was widespread in India. The evidence does not seem to support this. The fact that references to him in Indian *śāstras* are infrequent might indicate either that he was little known, or that his views were not

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[73]See note 71 above.

[74]mdor na thcg pa chcn po'i tshul gnyis ris su ma chad par 'dzin cing / khyad par dbUma pa gang zhig tshad ma la thugs zhen che ba mams ni shing rta chen po 'di'i srol la ngang gis dga' shing 'zhug par 'gyur ba shig go/ V. p.8.

[75]Roerich, i.42.

[76]See Hattori (1968:4).

held in high enough esteem to be commented upon. Moreover, the notion that he was invited to Tibet because he was one of the most eminent Indian *paṇḍitas* is open to doubt. The reverse might have been the case. It is conceivable that he was only available to go to Tibet because he had no other significant calls upon his time.[77]

Although it is the case that complete commentaries on his works are rare, there is evidence that Śāntarakṣita's doctrinal importance was nevertheless acknowledged by his Indian peers, specifically by way of brief references to his position. In his unpublished doctoral thesis, Jundo Nagashima[78] has found that apart from Kamalaśīla's works there are at least four treatises *(śāstras)* that mention Śāntarakṣita by name in this way. In the *Jñānasārasamuccayanāmānibandhana* of Bodhibhadra[79] (P. [95] (5252) tsha 51b7-8)[80] one reads:

> *Those who do not deny [the external reality of] appearance are scholars* (slob dpon) *[such as] Bhāvaviveka and others, and those who assert that things which appear are not as they are [i.e. external], but in fact internal cognition appearing in various ways, are scholars [such as] Śāntarakṣita and others.*[81]

One can also point to the passage from the *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* of Sahajavajra[82] (P. [68] (3099); Derge ed. 2254 wi 164b5-6, v.2a) which is often mentioned by Tibetan doxographers to prove the existence of the Sākāra- and Nirākāra-Yogācāra-Madhyamaka in India.

> *The Sākāra Madhyamaka* (rnam pa dang bcas pa'i dbu ma) *and the Nirākāra Madhyamaka* (rnam pa med pa'i dbu ma) *are [the two] main [schools] to be explained. Accordingly, the followers of Śāntarakṣita and others accept the Sākāra Madhyamaka.*[83]

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[77]These points have arisen in discussions with Professor Paul Williams.
[78]See bibliography.
[79]Tibetan: *byang chub bzang po.*
[80]This passage is quoted in Ruegg (1981a:58).
[81]snang ba la mi 'jal ba ni slob dpon bha la sogs pa dang/ snang ba'i dngos po ji lta ba ma yin gyi nang gi shes pa khon sna tshogs su snang bar smra ba slob dpon zhi ba 'tsho la sogs pa'o/
[82]Tibetan: *lhan cig skyes pa'i rdo rje.*
[83]zhes bya ba ni rnam pa dang bcas pa'i dbu ma dang / rnam pa med pa'i dbu ma gsal bya ba'i gtso bo'i di dag go // gang gi phyir zhi ba 'tsho'i zhal snga nas la sogs pas rnam pa dang bcas pa'i dbu ma nyid khas len par byed de /

The *Marmakaumudī* by Abhayākaragupta[84] (P. [92] (5202), Da 27b2-3; Derge ed. 3805 da 24a1-2), who was mentioned above by Mi pham as a follower of Śāntarakṣita, also refers to him by name in the first chapter.

> *It follows that Haribhadra and others who follow* ācārya *Śāntarakṣita, who maintains representation only as mental object* (sgra don)*, hold the absence of duality* (gnyis pa med) *because there is no external [object] even conventionally; conventionally, blue and so forth are mental objects that have the nature of direct perception which is reflexive* (rang rig pa'i mngon sum)*, [and] they do not accept [the position of] those who assert that ultimately there is absence of intrinsic existence* (ngo bo nyid, svabhāva)*.*[85]

Finally, in the *Ratnakaraṇḍodghāṭa* (P. [102] (5325) A 126a5-6; Derge ed. 3930, 112b5-6) Atiśa also refers to Śāntarakṣita by name.

> *Ācārya Bhavya, Buddhapālita, Devaśarman, Avalokitavrata, Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla and others wrote detailed works on the Madhyamaka.*[86]

All these passages refer to Śāntarakṣita as a—if not the—representative of the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka view. In addition, there are many other texts that cite a few lines from his works without mentioning his name, presumably on the understanding that the educated reader will recognize the source. Examples are found in Prajñākaramati's *pañjikā* on *Bodhicaryāvatāra* IX.2, where the first verse of the MAL is cited verbatim,[87] and Atiśa's *Satyadvayāvatāra*, the third verse of which cites verse 64 of the MAL.[88] It is therefore a mistake to allege that Śāntarakṣita was little known or respected in India. It can be argued that references to him were not very detailed because Śāntarakṣita was so well known this was not necessary. Generally speaking, however, we have to admit that scholars have not commented on his works as a whole and discuss only specific issues arising from them.

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[84]Tibetan: *'jigs med 'byung gnas shas pa.*
[85]'di nyid kyis na sgra don rnam par rig par smra ba'i slob dpon zhi ba'i 'tsho dang dc'i 'dod pa'i rjcs su 'brang ba'i seng ge bzang po la sogs pas kun rdzob tu yang phyi rol med pas gnyis pa med de/ kun rdzob tu sngon po la sogs pa ni rang rig pa'i mngon sum gyi bdag nyid can gyi sgra don la don dam par ni ngo bo nyid med ces pa'i 'dod pa ni mi 'thad de/
[86]slob dpon bha bya dang/ bu ddha pa'a li ta dang/ de ba shar ma dang/ spyan las gzigs brtul zhugs dang/ sha'a nta ra kzhi ta dang/ ka ma la shi'i la la sogs pas ni dbu ma'i gzhung rgyas par mdzad do /
[87]See the citation in Lindtner (1981:182).
[88]Tibetan text and translation in Lindtner (1981:190ff).

II.4.3 Monastic vows

The passage in Mi pham's commentary that deals with the way Śāntarakṣita upheld his monastic vows is extremely brief. He is said to have been the most eminent representative of the monastic tradition in India, and quite incomparable in the perfect way he followed the monastic way of life.

The mere fact that Śāntarakṣita was indeed a monk is uncontested, and indeed it is supported by a number of details in the histories. As we have already seen, he received his monastic ordination from Jñānagarbha, and is included in the ordination lineage cited by 'Gos lo tsa ba (i.34). Bu ston (1932:190) mentions that the northern wall of the bSam yas temple was painted with the Vinaya lineage masters which specifically include Śāntarakṣita.[89] Also, Tibetan iconography always depicts him as a monk. However, the claim that he was a perfect monk is impossible to substantiate. It may, of course, have been the case, but on the other hand it may be exaggerated by the devotion of those who consider him to be the founder of Tibetan monasticism and, in the case of rNying ma pas such as Mi pham, a master in their own continuing Vinaya lineage.[90]

II.4.4 Spiritual accomplishment

It is inherently difficult to assess someone else's spiritual accomplishment because the mind as such is not visible or perceptible. To illustrate what he considers to be Śāntarakṣita's advanced accomplishment, Mi pham therefore gives examples of what he sees as tangible achievements which can be taken as signs of that accomplishment. His first statement is arguably one of the most important he makes in the entire commentary. It sums up the main significance of Śāntarakṣita for Mi pham.

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[89]It appears that these frescoes are now destroyed, so it is unclear whether they were made in the 8-9th centurics or much latcr. Scc Fishcr (1997:130).

[90]For a discussion of the status of Śāntarakṣita's lineage today, see the section on his activity below.

The two charioteers [i.e. Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga] perfectly revealed the meaning of the Mahāyāna doctrine, [and] he [Śāntarakṣita] took birth deliberately in order to open a third chariot-way that unites them.[91]

This assertion gives rise to one of the main themes developed by Mi pham. Briefly, he contends that Śāntarakṣita holds a uniquely significant place not only in the history of Tibet and the history of Buddhism in Tibet but much more broadly within what could be called the history of Buddhist philosophy. In other words, Śāntarakṣita's work is a land-mark in the evolution of Mahāyāna doctrine as a whole. Just as Nāgārjuna established the first Mahāyāna chariot-way of Madhyamaka, and just as Asaṅga established the second Mahāyāna chariot-way of Yogācāra, so Śāntarakṣita effectively established a third Mahā-yāna chariot-way that brings the former two together into a single path and a single view. Mi pham's appraisal of Śāntarakṣita is important and will be evaluated in our concluding Chapter X.

Almost in passing, Mi pham mentions at this point the legend according to which Śānta-rakṣita was the reincarnation of one of the four sons of the Nepalese poultry woman who built one of the great *stūpas* in Boudhnath.[92] The sons vowed to be born together again in order to bring the Buddhist teaching to Tibet, and one tradition has it that three of these sons were later born as none other than Śāntarakṣita, Padmasambhava and Khri srong lde brtsan.[93] Mi pham adds that Padmasambhava and Śāntarakṣita were born early while Khri srong lde brtsan was born late, so the first two had to wait nine hundred years for their friend to appear. To account for this, he says that they were blessed with the power of longevity which, in the context of this biography, must constitute in Mi pham's mind a

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[91]theg pa chen po'i bka'i dgongs pa shing rta gnyis kyis legs par phyes zin na'ang de dag dgongs pa gcig tu sgrub pa'i shing rta'i lam srol gsum pa phye ba'i don tu bsam bzhin tu sprul nas V.p.8.

[92]The full story of this legend can be found in *The Legend of the Great Stupa and the Life Story of the Lotus Born Guru*, translated by Keith Dowman, Dharma Publishing, Berkeley, 1973. This legend is special to the rNying ma tradition.

[93]According to a different tradition, there were three brothers who were reborn as Khri srong lde brtsan, Śāntarakṣita and gSal snang of sBa'. This is recorded in *The Clear Mirror* by Sonam Gyaltsen, in the note on p.292, and also in the *Blue Annals* (Roerich, i.38-9).

further indication of his subject's spiritual accomplishment.

At this juncture, then, Mi pham's account introduces material found in the rNying ma *rnam thar* of Padmasambhava. As we mentioned above, some scholars[94] give no credence to this literature in terms of its historical value, the perception being that Padmasambhava was constructed as a legendary hero by rNying ma pas in the 13th century onwards as a defensive measure against the emerging new translation schools. We will therefore simply note the controversial context of Mi pham's remarks here, and the difficulty involved in the possibility that Śāntarakṣita himself was "constructed" as part of this legend.

The purported length of Śāntarakṣita's life is obviously questionable. Several histories concur with the legend cited by Mi pham, which means that on this point the histories are actually based on what we would call legend. The *Blue Annals* (i.38-9), Tāranātha's *History* (fol.105B) and bDud 'joms rin po che's history of the rNying ma school[95] are all based on the *sBa bzhad*, and maintain that Śāntarakṣita lived for the length of nine reigns before meeting Khri srong lde brtsan and Padmasambhava.[96] According to Tāranātha's calculation this would mean that he would have been alive at the time of Asaṇga (4th century C.E.) and Vasubandhu (4th-5th centuries C.E.), and "that is quite incredible", Tāranātha (105B) observes. The *deb ther dmar po* also mentions that "according to one report" (which is likely to refer to the *sBa bzhad*) Śāntarakṣita entered *nirvāṇa* at the age of one thousand years.[97] More rationally, however, Tāranātha (105B) asserts that he "must have

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[94]For example, see Snellgrove (1987:397).
[95]*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* by Dudjom Rinpochc, Wisdom Publications, London, 1991.
[96]See also the *Blue Annals* (Roerich, i.39) where Śāntarakṣita recounts the story to gSal snang of sBa'. Roerich sources the story to *Pad ma'i bka' thang*, fol.187a, 299b. In a subsequent passage (ibid., i.42-3) Śāntarakṣita reminds the king of the story when they first meet, as Mi pham says.
[97]ibid.

lived sometime between king Gopāla and king Dharmapāla".[98] It is this latter chronology that is preferred by modern scholars. Even among Tibetan Buddhists, and even among present-day rNying ma pas, interpretations of this extraordinarily long lifespan vary. Some, like Rin gu sprul sku[99], suggest that accounts like this are simply exaggerations while others like Dudjom Rinpoche (1991:889-890), reserve judgement. Mi pham appears to have accepted the claim.

Mi pham next proceeds to a third spiritual accomplishment, which he illustrates by way of an anecdote relating to the consecration of bSam yas monastery. He says that at the time of its consecration Khri srong lde brtsan saw Śāntarakṣita himself as Mañjuśrī in person.[100] Even ordinary people saw statues of the deities as being alive. This further external sign of his inner accomplishment is therefore that he could perform miracles. Finally, Śāntarakṣita achieved more than most other great *bodhisattvas* in that he established Buddhism in Tibet where nobody had succeeded in doing so before.[101]

To conclude this section, it is necessary to make some appraisal of these extraordinary claims. This is not easy. Those who do not subscribe to a mystical approach to religion generally, or to the soteriology of Buddhism in particular, would have to conclude that anecdotal evidence of miracles and of a life lasting for a thousand years pertains not to historical fact—or even to the realms of possibility—but to unsubstantiated religious belief. They are signs not of the spiritual accomplishment of a religion's adepts but of the wishful thinking of its followers.

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[98]Given as 770-821 in *A History of India* by H.Kulke and D. Rothermund, Routledge, London and New York, 1986. 3rd edition 1998, p.355.

[99]A contemporary lama of the rNying ma and bKa' rgyud schools (personal communication).

[100]The date of the consecration was probably 779 C.E., the date of the king's edict *(bka' gtsigs)* proclaiming its inauguration. See 'The First Chos-byung' by H. Richardson in *The Tibet Journal*, 1980,Vol.V, no:3, pp.62-73.

[101]See Guenther (1974:80-92) for a different view.

The inherent difficulty here lies in the way that the very notion of spiritual accomplishment in Mahāyāna Buddhism takes one beyond the limits of the rational mind, so it is not readily subject to purely rational scrutiny. It falls into Mohanty's category of testimonial evidence of a supersensible object that can be known by other means and which, in the context of modern scholarship, cannot be verified.

For Mi pham, there was no conflict between Śāntarakṣita the logician and master of debate, and Śāntarakṣita the yogin and performer of miracles.[102] They are seen by rNying ma pas merely as two different facets of enlightened activity, the one communicated conceptually and the other directly. Moreover, it can be argued that the possibility of extraordinary actions defying the usual physical parameters of our experience, is logically accounted for in the various scriptural descriptions of the stages of advanced meditation.[103] If we accept such activity is possible, the real question is whether or not this spiritual accomplishment was present in Śāntarakṣita's individual case. Some rNying ma pas and Sa skya pas definitely believe that it was.[104] The evidence is inconclusive.

II.4.5 Human qualities

For Mi pham, Śāntarakṣita's human qualities are those which enabled him to benefit sentient beings and contribute to the Buddhist teachings themselves. Mi pham infers that he was called 'Bodhisattva' to reflect his compassionate and wise nature.[105] In summary,

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[102]A different source of testimony to Śāntarakṣita's magical powers is found in the Bon po histories. See *The Treasury of Good Sayings: a Tibetan history of Bon,* cd. and transl. by Samtcn G. Karmay, Oxford Univcrsity Press, London, 1972, pp.88-89.

[103]See, for example, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* by Asaṅga and Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama.*

[104]Dudjom Rinpoche (1991:864) regards him as a treasure-revealer *(gter ston)*, and the Sa skya pa historian bSod nams rgyal tsan refers to the miracles which have taken place around the *stūpa* containing Śāntarakṣita's skull. See *The Clear Mirror (rgyal rab gsal ba'i me long)* by Sonam Gyaltsen, translated by McComas Taylor and Lama Choedrak Yuthok, Snow Lion, Ithaca, 1996, p.20.

[105]Bu ston calls him "*slob dpon Bodhisattva*" (transl. Obermiller, 1931-2:188) and so does Tāranātha (Chattopadhyaya's translation, p.269). More significantly, we find him referred to under this name in very early documents. 'Gos lo tsa ba cites the *sBa bzhad* as a (roughly) contemporaneous source with this name (Roerich, i.38-39). Also, text IOL 689/2 from Dun Huang (fol.116b), listing the abbots of bSam yas monastery, begins: "The list of the lineage of teachers who were born in Tibet. As for the disciples of the Indian abbot, the Bodhisattva...". See Karmay (1988:76-80).

Mi pham says that Śāntarakṣita perfected the three main Dharma activities that are considered the hallmark of a great Buddhist teacher, namely expounding the teachings, refuting wrong views through debate, and composing treatises.

We have clear evidence that he composed treatises since several are contained in the *bstan 'gyur,* and are extant in either Sanskrit or Tibetan translation. The treatises in the *bstan 'gyur* which are generally accepted[106] as authored by Śāntarakṣita are listed by Tāranātha.[107] They can be classified as follows:

bsTod tshogs section

Śrī Vajradhara saṃgīta bhagavati stotra ṭīkā (bcom ldan 'das la bstod pa dpal rdo rje 'dzin gyi dbyangs kyi rgya cher bshad pa)
(bstod 52) (P. [46] (2052) Ka1 270b5-277b3)
No author given.[108]

Aṣṭa tathāgata stotra (de bshin gshegs pa brgyad pa la bstod pa)
(bstod 55) (P.[46] (2055) ka1 278b8-279b8)
Author: Shi ba'i tsho. Translators: Not named.

rGyud 'grel section

Hevajra udbhava kurukullā pañca mahā upadeśa (kye'i rdo rje las byung ba'i ku ru kulle'i man ngag chen po lnga)
(rga xxii.29) (P.[57] (2447) Za 122b3-123b3.
Author: Shi ba 'tsho. Translator: Dānaśīla.

Tattva siddhi nāma prakaraṇa (de kho na nyid grub pa shes bya ba'i rab tu byed pa)
(rga lxxii.4) (P.[81] (4531) Nu 28a5-42b1.
Author: Shi ba'i tsho. Translators: Dīpamkaraśrījñāna, Rinchen bzang po.
Revised: Kumārakalaśa, Śākya 'od

dbU ma section

Satya dvaya vibhaṅga pañjikā (bden pa gnyis rnam par 'byed pa'i dka' 'grel)[109]
(mdo xxviii.3) (P. [100] (5283) Sa 1-48b7.
Author: Shi ba tsho. Translators: Prajñāvarma, Jñānagarbha, Ye shes sde.

Madhyamakālaṁkāra kārikā (dbu ma'i rgyan gyi tshig le'ur byas pa)
(mdo xxviii.4) (P. [101] (5284) Sa 48b7-52b1
Author: Shi ba tsho. Translators: Sīlendrabodhi, Ye shes sde

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[106]See Chattopadhyaya (1967:228ff.) for a discussion on authorship.
[107]op.cit., Supplementary Notes, p.415-6.
[108]The authorship of this is uncertain, and further research is needed to establish this.
[109]Tsong kha pa has questioned Śāntarakṣita's authorship of this work on the grounds that it upholds views that are incompatible with those of the MAL. See Eckel (1987:27-31).

Sems tsam section

Samvara viṃśaka vṛtti (sdom pa ñi zhu pa'i 'grel pa)
(mdo lxi.13) (P. [114] (5583) Ku 192b8-213a2)
Translators: Vidyākarasiṃha, Mañjuśrīvarman.

Rig pa section

Vāda nyāya vṛtti vipañcitārthā nāma (rtsod pa'i rigs pa'i 'grel pa don rnam par 'byed pa)

Madhyamakālaṁkāra vṛtti (dbu ma'i rgyan gyi 'grel pa)
(mdo xxviii.5) (P. [101] (5285) Sa 52b1-84b7)
Author: Shi ba tsho. Translators: Śīlendrabodhi, Ye shes sde.
(mdo cviii.2-cxii.4) (P. [136] (5725) Tshe 21b2-137a8)
Translators: Kumāraśrībhadra, 'Phags pa shes rab.

Tattva saṅgraha kārikā (de kho na ñid bsdus pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa)
(mdo cxiii.1) (P. [138] (5764) He 1-159a5)
Translators: Gunākaraśrībhadra, dPal lha btsan pa, Shi ba 'od.

Daṇḍa hasta lekha
(rga lxxvi.32) (not located in the Peking edition by the present author)

We also have evidence that he expounded the teachings in India, where he had at least one disciple, namely Kamalaśīla, and in Tibet, too, he is said to have had several disciples.[110] The later histories also agree that he expounded the Buddhist doctrine in Tibet.[111] The evidence for his debating skills was discussed earlier.

The remainder of Mi pham's account of his human qualities contains the narrative of the main events of his life as found in 'Gos lo tsa ba—how he studied and taught in Nālandā, went to Tibet, met Khri srong lde brtsan, taught basic Buddhist teachings, returned to Nepal on account of opposition, and went back later with Padmasambhava to consecrate bSam yas monastery.[112] There he had many scriptures translated and firmly established the Dharma. Mi pham has added another detail to this account which is not found in other

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[110]The Dun Huang document cited above in note 1 refers to the first abbots of bSam yas as Śāntarakṣita's disciples.
[111]See Roerich (i.43). Also see Bu ston (op.cit., p.188) who reports specifically that "he expounded in the palace Lung tshug for four months the teaching of the ten virtues, of the eighteen component elements of the individual, and of the twelve-membered causal chain."
[112]Snellgrove dates this second arrival in Central Tibet to 767 C.E. See Snellgrove (1987:440).

sources. He asserts that Śāntarakṣita caused the Buddhist doctrine to spread in China.

> *It is said that he successfully spread the Buddhist teaching in China and so on.*[113]

According to mKhan chen Pad ma shes rab, this information is not found in any known writings but is specific to the oral tradition. We will therefore assume that the oral tradition was Mi pham's source in this case. Again according to mKhan chen Pad ma shes rab, the period that Śāntarakṣita spent in China (which he did not attempt to date) should be linked to the story we came across earlier, that Śāntarakṣita was born many hundreds of years before Khri srong lde brstan, and he travelled to China in the meantime. Corroboration of this story would require research into Chinese sources. Nevertheless, it must be said that it would probably be impossible to identify an earlier figure travelling in China with the Śāntarakṣita we know in 8th century India, not least because the written works that we know he authored belong only to this latter period.

II.4.6 His activity

Under this final heading, Mi pham lists many of the achievements with which we are familiar from the Tibetan histories. In particular, he mentions that Śāntarakṣita established the Vinaya lineage in Tibet by ordaining the first seven Tibetans, that he trained translators, caused both written and spoken Buddhist teachings to spread, and helped to defeat the *bon pos.*

Probably the most disputed of these achievements is the first. The mere fact that he ordained the first seven monks *(sad mi mi bdun)* in Tibet is quite likely.[114] The fact that he was the first abbot of bSam yas monastery is directly attested.[115] What is in doubt is

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[113]rgya nag la sogs par sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa leg par bskyangs par bshad la/ V.p.9.
[114]Snellgrove has reason to question this traditional figure, although he does not cite his source(s). See Snellgrove (1987), p.430. The names of these monks vary from source to source.
[115]Dun Huang IOL 689/2 cited above.

whether the Vinaya lineage he established in the 8th century has continued into modern times, or whether it was broken during the years following the persecution of the monasteries by gLang dar ma. The extent of Śāntarakṣita's achievement in this domain is very different depending on which conclusion is reached.

'Gos lo tsa ba (i.17a) asserts that in Tibet there were three lineages of ordination. The first was through Nāgārjuna and so on, through Śāntarakṣita and sBa ratna. This is known as the Lower Vinaya *(smad 'dul)*. The second lineage known as the Upper Vinaya *(stod 'dul)* was through rGyal ba'i shes rab of Zhang zhung and an Indian scholar named Dharmapāla. The third lineage also came from Nāgārjuna, then through Śrī Dharmapāla and so on through Śākyaśrībhadra and Tsong kha pa. This was called the Middle Vinaya *(bar 'dul)* but after the second lineage was discontinued, it became known as the Upper Vinaya. 'Gos lo tsa ba indicates that the second lineage was already broken in his time, i.e. in the 15th century, while the other two were continuing. Since he is known to have been a Sa skya pa scholar, he had no sectarian interest in asserting the continuation of the first lineage which is held mainly by rNying ma pas and dGe lugs pas.

Some sources maintain that the Lower Vinaya introduced by Śāntarakṣita came to an end in the 10th century when monks in Central Tibet were made to disrobe and disperse.[116] The rNying ma pas, however, say that this is a misundertanding and claim that the lineage managed to survive those difficult times. The sources they quote in support are the lists of names of the masters from whom the lineage has been passed down.[117] In addition, they explain that although monastic Buddhism did indeed disappear from Central Tibet during the persecution period, it was able to continue uninterrupted in Western Tibet. mKhan

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[116] The *Blue Annals* (i.53 and 60) can be interpreted this way.

[117] The lineage masters are given by Tulku Thondup in his Preface to *Perfect Conduct: Ascertaining the Three Vows* by Dudjom Rinpoche, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1996, p.xii. This list is included in a 'lineage prayer'.

chen Pad ma shes rab, who is himself a monk in this lineage, recounts a traditional story according to which one of gLang dar ma's queens informed him that despite all his efforts at stamping out Buddhism, there was still a Buddhist yogi in Western Tibet who had five hundred disciples. His name was Nub sang rgyas ye shes. gLang dar ma was furious and summoned the yogi to his court. gLang dar ma said to him, "You are supposed to have great powers, so prove it." Nub sang rgyas ye shes pointed in the air, and instantly there appeared a scorpion as large as a yak. The king was terrified. Then the yogi pointed again in the air and there came lightning and thunder which split a huge rock outside Lha sa. On seeing this gLang dar ma said that he could continue teaching Buddhism in his region. This, says the tradition, is how the lineage and indeed the entire tradition, both monastic and tantric, came to be perfectly preserved.

'Khrul zhig rin po che,[118] another rNying ma pa lama and holder of the Lower Vinaya lineage, explains that the reason the continuation has been doubted is because three Chinese monks were involved in one of the ordination transmissions in Tibet in the 10th century C.E.[119] It is argued that in view of this the Vinaya has not been transmitted correctly, even if the line of lineage masters mentioned above is accepted, because the Chinese monks were of a different lineage. According to 'Khrul zhig rin po che this is a misunderstanding, since the requirement is for five monks from the same lineage to be present, while another three (making eight in all) should be present merely as witnesses. The Chinese monks were merely witnesses, and therefore the transmission took place correctly, he claims.

It is difficult to see what other type of evidence can reasonably be sought in this case,

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[118]Often known as Zhab de'u 'Khrul zhig rin po che ngag dbang chos kyi blo gros, this rNying ma lama lives in Kathmandu, Nepal, and is the foremost disciple of Dil mgo mkhyen brtse rin po che.
[119]Oral communication in answer to the question discussed here, given to the present author in France in May 2000.

since it is highly unlikely that the names and details of those present were written down at the time, or if they were, that those documents are still extant. The Vinaya holders themselves consider the list of lineage masters to be authentic, yet 'Gos lo tsa ba[120] found discrepancies between different recensions of other lineages, so errors cannot be ruled out. There is probably a case for saying that this is an account of what Tibetans believe about the lineage, and its factual accuracy is an open question. Linking this discussion back to the main topic, then, it is clear that some Tibetans believe not only that Śāntarakṣita introduced the monastic Vinaya to Tibet but also that his legacy in this respect has proved long lasting, and continues to the present-day in Tibet itself and within the Tibetan community in exile.

As his final point on the scope of Śāntarakṣita's activity, Mi pham states that Śāntarakṣita has 'personally' continued to protect the Dharma in Tibet over the centuries, through a series of incarnations *(sprul sku)*. It is said in the rNying ma oral tradition that there is an emanation or incarnation of Śāntarakṣita in each generation, and Atiśa himself is considered to have been one of them.[121] It follows that the scope of Śāntarakṣita's activity is utterly vast and as yet without end. Here, Mi pham has therefore included Śāntarakṣita and his incarnation-successors in the *sprul sku* system of recognized incarnate lamas that is characteristic of Tibet.[122] All the rNying ma pa lamas consulted for this study accepted this claim as true. According to the scholar Thub bstan nyi ma[123] Śāntarakṣita's current incarnation is Chos dbyings thub bstan rdo rje, a rNying ma lama in the *klong chen snying*

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[120]In Part II of the *Blue Annals*, he notes occasional discrepancies between different accounts of particular Vinaya lineages, although not specifically in this case.

[121]This is one way of interpreting the first verse of 'Brom ston pa's *'bstod pa (stotra)* addressed to Dīpaṃkara, translated by Chattopadhyaya in *Atīśa in Tibet*, pp.372-376. "I offer prayer to the feet of Dīpaṃkaraśrī, who was born in the noble jīva-family of the kings of sa-hor of tri-sampanna Bengal, in the same line to which Śāntijīva [Śāntarakṣita] belonged." The other way is, of course, to take this literally in the sense of genealogy.

[122]For a brief explanation of this sytem, see *A Handbook of Tibetan Culture*, ed. Graham Coleman, Rider, 1993, p.405.

[123]Currently a research fellow at Columbia University, New York.

thig tradition living in Ri kung, Amdo province, Tibet (China) and a teacher of rDo grub chen rin po che who now lives in Gangtok, Sikkim, northern India.

Finally, we should add here that some rNying ma pas[124] also consider that the 8th century historical figure of Śāntarakṣita was an emanation of Vajrapāṇi.[125] Vajrapāṇi (*Phyag na rdo rje*) is a primary bodhisattva-deity of the rNying ma school, believed to protect and disseminate Mahāyāna teachings and to have been instrumental in transmitting the tantric teachings to human beings. In order to evaluate this, and Mi pham's claims on the nature and extent of Śāntarakṣita's activity, one must refer to the discussion on spiritual accomplishment above. Similar concerns apply here.

II.4.7 Mi pham's appraisal of Śāntarakṣita

The biographical section of Mi pham's commentary ends with a verse passage summarising his main points on Śāntarakṣita's doctrinal significance. The most relevant section is as follows:

> *The teachings of [the Buddha] the supreme protector, were explained by Asaṇga's treatises with respect to vast activities, and by Nāgārjuna with respect to the profound view. These two are therefore known as the two charioteers [and] are as famous as the sun and moon. Learned bodhisattvas [then] developed their approaches and propagated them in [two] streams, but they were unable to taste the great banquet of the Buddhist Mahāyāna in its entirety. But you [O Śāntarakṣita], in a single great draft assimilated through analysis and reasoning the [entire] ocean of both traditions* (shing rta). *You [beautify] the vast space of the sky with the clouds of all the Mahāyāna teachings. Having reached the ultimate truth, the heart's peace, which is like the sky, [Candrakīrti] hangs like the moon*[126] *glorious over the three worlds. Dharmakīrti (Chos kyi grags pa) saw clearly and distinctly all conventional phenomena like a rainbow; his fame has filled the*

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[124] Oral commentary by mKhan chen Pad ma shes rab.

[125] Vajrapāṇi was a central figure in Indian Tantric Buddhism before 4th century C.E. See Nakamura (1987: 315).

[126] There is a play on words here, since 'candra' is a Sanskrit term for 'moon'.

world. The commentaries of the learned scholars who elucidate their teachings are like a beautiful but unstable palanquin, which is not strong enough to encompass easily and at once the vastness of the two kinds of immaculate logic. But you have covered the whole domain of reasoning on the two truths through the three steps of rational analysis (rnam dpyod gom pa)*.*[127] *You are an ornament [for the world] because you established all the various ways of reasoning. On account of this, the two traditions and this great tradition that unites the two are the three entrances into the Mahāyāna doctrine, and there is no other besides these three. Since you are the one who brought all the Buddha's teachings together, in this text you [present a] synthesis of the Mahāyāna [supported] by reasoning.*[128]

In Mi pham's view, then, the MAL is a milestone in Mahāyāna treatises in the sense that it presents a reasoned synthesis of all Mahāyāna approaches in one succinct yet comprehensive document. Mi pham argues that the MAL is the work *par excellence* to introduce scholars to Buddhist Mahāyāna doctrine in general as well as to the variety of different views that Mahāyāna encompasses. Indeed, it happens that Śāntarakṣita, writing in the 8th century, had the historical advantage of being able to draw from all the main strands of Indian Mahāyāna known today, as we will see in the next chapter. Following Mi pham, contemporary rNying ma scholars in India and Nepal do indeed use the MAL in their study colleges to introduce Madhyamaka.[129]

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[127]The three steps are conventional valid reasoning, the reasoning pertaining to the approximate ultimate, and the ultimate itself.

[128]V. p.13-14. rgyal ba skyab pa de yi legs gsung chos// rgya chen spyod pa'i bzhung bsang thogs med dang// zab mo lta ba'i cha rnams klus bkral bas// shing rta gnyis zhes nyi zla ltar grags kyang// de tshul skyong ba'i blo ltan sems dpa' rnams// legs bshad chu klung phyogs su bkram mod kyi// da dung thub pa chen po'i theg mchog mtsho// rdzogs par myong ba'i dga' ston thob pa med// khyod kyis tshul gnyis shing rta'i rgya mtsho ni// rnam dpyod rigs pa'i hub chen gcig gis 'thung// de tshe khyo ni nam mkha'i khams bzhin tu// mtha' dga theg chen chos yangs sprin gyis mjos// don dam mkha' lhar zhi ba'i thugs brnyes pas// dpal ldan zla ba 'jig rten gsum na mjos// tha snyad 'ja' ltar ma 'dres gsal gzigs pas// chos kyi grags pas sa chen 'dir khyab kyang// de tshul gsal bar byed pa'i mkhyen mchog rnams// gzhung lugs bzhon pa bzang po'i khyogs brten mod// dri med tsad ma gnyis kyi gnas yangs po// bde blag dus gcig gzhal ba'i stobs shugs zhan// khyod kyi bden gnyis rigs pa'i sa chen 'di// rnam dpyod gom pa'i stabs chen gsum gyis bcad// de tsho khyod ni 'dzin ma'i khyon bzhin tu// mtha' dag rigs pa'i tshul mang bkod pas mjos// de phyir tshul gnyis shing rta'i lam srol dang// de dag gcig tu bsgrubs pa'i srol chen te// thub pa'i theg mchog bstan pa'i 'jug ngogs la// gsum mo 'di las gzhan pa'i srol mi srid// rgyal kun bka' ye sdud po khyod yin phyir// 'dir ni theg mchog rigs pa'i tshul gyis bstus//

[129]For example, in the study colleges run by Chos kyi nyi ma rin po che in Kathmandu, Nepal, and by Pad nor rin po che in Bylakuppe, Mysore, south India.

Furthermore, Mi pham places Śāntarakṣita on a par with Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, in the sense that Śāntarakṣita brought together the two traditions of Mahāyāna which his two predecessors had respectively set in motion. This is a tremendously bold contention and one of great significance within the context of Mahāyāna history. It shows just how important it is, especially for rNying ma pas, to see all Buddhist traditions as fundamentally coherent and to appreciate the underlying understanding that unifies them all.[130] The present study sets out to assess just how Śāntarakṣita was able to unify the doctrinal approaches of Madhyamaka and Cittamātra, and to evaluate Mi pham's appraisal of his enterprise. But first, to complete this introductory section, we need to situate Śāntarakṣita's work within the context of Indian philosophy as a whole.

[130]Pettit (1999:88-100).

CHAPTER THREE HIS PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT

III.1 What questions was Śāntarakṣita asking?

In order to understand Śāntarakṣita's school of thought, we could ask ourselves what precise philosophical views he was aiming to refute. But this is not the root of the matter. A philosopher *qua* philosopher reflects on questions that interest him in their own right, and it is only when he finds that others before him have not answered them to his satisfaction that he then seeks to formulate his own solutions. The questions, then, are primary, and the various views that will be refuted in the process of defining a solution are secondary. So our chief concerns are the following: what were the outstanding philosophical problems that Śāntarakṣita was moved to solve? What were his solutions? How did he arrive at those solutions? Are these coherent? What contribution do they make philosophically? As a result of this approach, a picture should emerge not merely of an ancient school of Indian thought, but also of the philosophical insight of a brilliant individual who inspired generations of scholars after him. Indeed, why not our own?

In order to identify the philosophical questions that were "in the air" for Śāntarakṣita, one has to look at his context, and from our present historical vantage point there are only a limited number of ways we can do this. We can refer to textual evidence, that is, survey the ideas that were debated by Buddhists and non-Buddhists in the preceding centuries. We can also take into account other forms of cultural evidence as instances of possible influence: developments in art or in the socio-political environment. All of these sources help to constitute a general history of ideas. We can also take positive advantage of hindsight and consider the broader phases of philosophical and religious development; in the case of Mahāyāna Buddhism, for instance, this would mean identifying the dominant questions that were being asked during its last phase in India, and the trends that were

shaping Śāntarakṣita's own period. Finally, of course, and some might argue, more pertinently, we can look directly at Śāntarakṣita's text to see what questions it asks or implies.

The approach proposed here will *first* examine the salient points of the MAL to infer the questions that Śāntarakṣita was effectively addressing, since this is our direct evidence for his thought.[1] *Second,* we will look at the philosophical and religious trends in his period as a form of evidence indicating what the dominant concerns were at the time; and *third,* in subsequent chapters, we will relate the questions or problems thus identified with any answers given by Śāntarakṣita's predecessors by means of textual references, and attempt to identify why those answers may have appeared philosophically unsatisfactory to him. In other words, we will construct the main features of a philosophical situation in which Śāntarakṣita effectively responded to some sort of need.

Finally, it is useful to note that a further method of categorizing the approaches to presenting philosophical schools is to say that they can be made from two basic directions: backwards and forwards.[2] The former involves interpreting a school by using subsequent commentaries on it, while the latter involves beginning before the school had even arisen and examining the antecedent conditions and potential influences that helped to bring it about, as a way of contextualizing its earliest stages. This study of the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka school will, broadly speaking, adopt the latter approach first, and then adopt the former approach by referring to Mi pham's commentarial interpretation. In this way, the picture of the school that emerges will be comprehensive. However, it is not always practical to segregate these two approaches entirely, primarily because this presentation will itself be

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[1]The TS is also, of course, a rich source of his thought, and indeed deals with many of the same topics in more detail than the MAL. But the MAL is not merely a condensation of the TS, it situates Śāntarakṣita's view doxographically.
[2]See King (1998:6).

a 21st century reading of the situation, which blurs the distinction between backward and forward approaches.

III.2 Two interpretations of the MAL: Kamalaśīla and Mi pham

Commentators differ in their understanding of the main topics addressed by the MAL. Specifically, the two most comprehensive commentaries, by Kamalaśīla and Mi pham, offer differing interpretations of what the main subject-matter of the MAL actually is.

Mi pham inserts a topical outline *(sa bcad)* into the body of his commentary, which is the Tibetan equivalent of a table of contents and traditionally seen as a summary of main topics.[3] According to Mi pham's *sa bcad*, the MAL is primarily about the Two Truths, and can be divided into two main parts. In the first part (verses 1-90) Śāntarakṣita is concerned with establishing his own particular way of distinguishing between ultimate truth *(don dam bden pa; paramārthasatya)* and relative truth *(kun rdzob bden pa, saṃvṛtisatya)* and in the second part (verses 91-97) he concludes by praising this approach and emphasizing its beneficial effects. The main body of the text, corresponding to Mi pham's first part, can itself be subdivided into three sections. The first examines the ultimate truth of things (verses 1-62), and the second section then shows how they exist on the relative level (verses 63-66). Finally, the third section (verses 67-90) attempts to refute all the objections which might conceivably be levelled against the approach presented in verses 1-66. The main headings of the *sa bcad* can be summarised as follows:

shes bya bden gñis kyi tshul gtan la dbab pa
- bden gñis kyi tshul ngos bzung ba
- don dam par dngos po med par bstan pa
- kun rdzob tu dngos po yod par bstan pa

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[3]The Tibetan text and translation of Mi pham's *sa bcad* can be found in Appendix I. The *sa bcad* is embedded within the text of his commentary. However, the Cheng du edition of Mi pham's commentary has extracted the *sa bcad* and arranges it as a 'table of contents' for ease of reference, and it is on this that Appendix I is based.

- *de la rtsod pa spong ba*
bden gñis de 'dra ba'i tshul la bsnags pas don bsdu ba

Establishing the basis of what is to be known: the way of [distinguishing the] Two Truths
- Mastering the correct way [to distinguish] the Two Truths
    - Showing that entities do not exist on the ultimate level
    - Showing the existence of entities on the relative level
- Eliminating all objections to that

Summary praising this approach to the Two Truths

Mi pham's understanding of what the MAL is about differs significantly from the readings of Ichigō and Kajiyama, which are both based on Kamalaśīla's commentary, despite the fact that Mi pham's commentary as a whole follows the *vṛtti* and *pañjikā* very closely. These are the only major studies of the MAL in the English-language research literature. Ichigō has drawn up a contents outline of the MAL based on Śāntarakṣita's *vṛtti* and on Kamalaśīla's *pañjikā*.[4] While it follows the same section blocks as Mi pham's outline, it employs quite different section headings. The main subject of the MAL is said to be that "*dharmas* have neither a unitary nor a multiple nature", as stated in the first verse. This is treated in two main sections. The first (verses 2-62) investigates this view logically, using reasoning *(rigs pa; yukti)*, while the second (verses 63-90) investigates it with reference to scripture *(lung; āgama)*. In particular, the section on logic responds to objections accusing Śāntarakṣita of the logical errors of *asiddha, āśrayāsiddha* and *anyatarāsiddha*. The concluding section (verses 91-97) is a summary of Śāntarakṣita's philosophical and religious standpoint and a praise of the Buddha's teaching. The main headings according to this interpretation are:

I. Main subject of the treatise: All *dharma*-s have neither a unitary nor a multiple nature
II. Investigation according to reasoning *(yukti)*
    A. Reply to the objection that the author's thesis is based on the fallacy of an illegitimate logical mark *(asiddha)*

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[4]Pages CIV-CVIII of the Kyoto edition, and pages 185-189 of *Studies in the Literature of The Great Vehicle* ed. Luis O. Gómez and Jonathan A. Silk, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1989.

1. Reply to the objection that the author's thesis is based on the fallacy of a logical mark whose locus is unreal *(āśrayāsiddha)*, and which is not admitted either by the opponent or the proponent *(anyatarāsiddha)*
2. Reply to the objection that the author's thesis is based on the fallacy of a doubtful logical mark *(saṁdigdhāsiddha)*: The Buddha cognizes images.

III. Investigation according to scripture *(āgama)*
- A. Examination of relative truth *(saṃvṛtisatya)*
- B. Examination of ultimate truth *(paramārthasatya)*
- C. Examination of liberation

IV. Conclusion
- A. Śāntarakṣita's philosophical and religious standpoint
- B. The ambrosia of the Tathāgata's teaching.[5]

Kajiyama (1978:114-143) summarises the MAL along similar lines, emphasizing epistemological issues as the main subject-matter. Ruegg's (1981:90-93) summary of the text follows the same approach. He argues that the subject matter is the principle stated in the first verse, which is demonstrated first by reasoning (*yukti,* verses 2-62) and then with regard to the Two Truths following the philosophical tradition (*āgama,* 63-97).

An examination of the MAL itself makes it difficult to agree with Kamalaśīla's reasoning *(rigs pa; yukti) /* scriptural authority *(lung; āgama)* division without tighter definition. It will be shown in Chapter IV that logical reasoning is employed throughout the text and is not limited to the first 66 verses. The division can only be justified on a strictly narrow interpretation of the term, so that reasoning *(rigs pa; yukti)* refers exclusively to the 'neither one nor many argument' and not to reasoning in general.

Since this logical/scriptural distinction is not as clear-cut as Kamalaśīla's commentary implies, it is conceivable that he chose to make it deliberately in order to highlight the synthesis of approaches in the MAL. It makes the point that the MAL is firmly rooted in the logical tradition, while at the same time following authentic Mahāyāna scriptures to

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[5]Ichigō (1985:CIV-CVIII).

establish its viewpoint. It also emphasizes that the MAL is not simply a polemical text, or merely a further contribution to debate, but a work that expresses all the profundity of the Buddha's teaching. It may therefore have gone some way in placating possible opponents from other Buddhist schools, in the line of Candrakīrti for example, who might have objected to what could have been seen, at the time, as a controversial importation of logic into a Madhyamaka treatise. However, we have no evidence that Candrakīrti's view on this was strongly advocated by any successors in Śāntarakṣita's time, and consequently no evidence that Śāntarakṣita's use of logic was in itself controversial in his own period.[6] If anything, the opposite is the case. There is no evidence[7] of a Svātantrika/Prāsaṅgika opposition in India in the period between Candrakīrti and Śāntarakṣita, and no evidence that the use of inference was generally acknowledged to be an issue. Indeed Śāntarakṣita himself distinguishes the two types of proof with no indication that one is any more acceptable or controversial than the other, either to him or to other scholars.

> *This can be either proof* (bsgrub pa; sādhana) *or proof by undesired consequence* (thal ba; prasaṅga), *because there is no other type.*[8]

Kamalaśīla does likewise, although he acknowledges a preference for syllogism.

> *The object in question cannot be established through the proof of undesired consequence* (thal ba; prasaṅga), *because such an undesired consequence is not proof. For [although] the opponent's position is invalidated by means of the proof of undesired consequence, this [type of proof] cannot establish one's own position, which requires another proposition to be established for both sides.*[9]

The way Kamalaśīla argues his case in this passage seems to indicate that the two types of argument had not been clearly distinguished previously, and that Kamalaśīla himself may

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[6]The latest research by Jundo Nagashima (unpublished Ph.D. for Bristol University, UK) has not found any trace of an uninterrupted continuation of Candrakīrti's position in India.
[7]Nagashima, op.cit., p.120.
[8]*Satyadvayavibhaṅgapañjikā* 'di ni bsgrub pa'am thal bar bsgrub pa zhig tu 'gyur grang ste/ rnam pa gzhan ni med pa'i phyir ro//
[9]*Madhyamakāloka* (P.5287 sa 147a5-6): thal bar bsgrubs pas kyang mngon par 'dod pa'i don mi 'grub ste/ de lta bu'i thal ba nyid ma grub pa'i phyir ro// thal bar sgrub pa'i sgo nas ni gzhan gyi phyogs la gnod pa tsam du 'gyur gyi/ rang gyi phyogs 'grub pa ni ma yin te/ de ni gni ga la grub pa'i gtan tshigs gzhan la bltos pa'i phyir ro//

have played a significant role in drawing out their differences. On this basis, there is no reason to suppose that the use of logic in the MAL was controversial when it was written. Criticism of this nature would be coloured by subsequent developments in Tibet.

If this is so, then why did both Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla indicate that they considered the MAL's use of logic to be worthy of note? An alternative explanation is that the introduction of logic into the Madhyamaka context was seen as significant, indeed, as innovative. The Japanese scholar Shiro Matsumoto maintains that the later Mādhyamikas can in fact be defined as those who interpret Dharmakīrti's logic and epistemology in line with the Mādhyamika view.[10] Already in the 8th century, then, it is possible that the use of logic in the MAL was sensed to be a defining characteristic of Śāntarakṣita's contribution, and it was therefore given prominence in those outlines. By contrast, for Mi pham, logic and Madhyamaka naturally went hand in hand since their relationship had become an accepted fact in Tibet, albeit a debated one. This theme did not therefore reflect the main doctrinal issues that were of interest in the 19th century, so he did not select it for his own outline.

Further comparison of the two outlines will help highlight the features that are characteristic of each. So for instance, to say that the main subject of the MAL is the view that all *dharma*-s have neither a unitary nor a multiple nature is to take the opening proposition presented in the first verse as being the literal and complete expression of all that follows. However, one can argue that if that were indeed all the MAL was about, it would amount to nothing more than one particular example of the general Madhyamaka argument that all *dharma*-s are empty *(śūnya; stong pa)*. Mi pham, however, contends that the scope of

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[10]Cited by Nagashima (op.cit., p.147) with reference to 'Kōki-chūganha no Kūshiso' (The later Madhyamika view of emptiness), *Riso*, vol.610. In Japanese.

the MAL is much greater than this. By identifying its subject-matter as the Two Truths, he lifts its import from being an instance of one particular Madhyamaka argument on emptiness to that of being a particular approach to the central Buddhist principle of the Two Truths. It follows that showing that all *dharmas* are neither one nor many is simply the *method* chosen, not the purport of the work. Indeed, the chief distinction that can be made between Mi pham's understanding of the text and that of Ichigō, Kajiyama and Ruegg (following Kamalaśīla) is that the latter view it primarily in terms of logical and epistemological concerns, while the former directs the interest to metaphysical issues.

Whether or not one chooses to give preference to Mi pham's interpretation will depend on how one understands the nature of scholastic distinctions. For example, is a particular use of logic and epistemology sufficient to characterize a Buddhist school? Can a school best be described in epistemological terms, or in metaphysical ones? This is a big and complex question, and one which cannot be fully answered in this study. What we will have occasion to see is the way rNying ma and dGe lugs views differ with regard to the definition of Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka. We should note that the distinction between Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika schools developed in Tibet rested primarily, as the terms imply, on differences of methodology, the one accepting the use of autonomous inference *(svātantra anumana; rang rgyud rjes dpag)*, and the other showing undesired consequences for the opponent's position *(prasaṅga; thal 'gyur)*.[11] On the other hand, the distinction between Yogācāra and Madhyamaka can be considered a metaphysical one based on their differing interpretations of *śūnyatā*.[12] It follows that on this preliminary level, it is simply a matter of which aspect of Śāntarakṣita's thought one wishes to emphasize.

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[11]Lopez (1987:56-7). Tillemans (1982) notes that Prāsaṅgikas are not restricted to *prasaṅga* arguments in practice.

[12]See Nagao (1991:51-60; 189-200); Williams (1989:82-6).

Mi pham's view is consistent with his contention that each philosophical school of Buddhism is characterized by a particular way of interpreting and approaching the Two Truths—not by logic or epistemology. In his commentary on the MAL, Mi pham notes:

> *"The way in which the Two Truths are understood by the mind, be it completely false, partially true or perfectly correct, gives rise to the many different tenet systems, [both] Buddhist and non-Buddhist."*[13]

Mi pham's view that Buddhist schools can be characterized by their respective approaches to the Two Truths is one that is current among some scholars today.[14] It derives its authority from Nāgārjuna who emphasized the central importance of the Two Truths for Buddhist doctrine in the MMK (XXIV,8-9):

> *The doctrines taught by the Buddhas are based upon two truths:*
> *Worldly conventional truths and ultimate truth.*
> *Those who do not understand the distinction between these two truths*
> *Do not understand the profound nature of the Buddha's teaching.*[15]

Indeed, an experienced reader will know that around the Two Truths are clustered some of the great questions of Buddhist thought.[16] This includes epistemological problems, such as how to distinguish true understanding from erroneous understanding. It implies an exegetical dimension, since knowing how to distinguish the Two Truths means one will be capable of distinguishing the definitive meaning *(nitārtha)* of the Buddha's words from their interpretative meaning *(neyārtha)*. The Two Truths also have a moral and soteriological dimension, because fully understanding the ultimate is synonymous with enlightenment itself. And lastly, behind the Two Truths lie questions of ontology. In the words of Malcolm Eckel (1987:26), "the Two Truths serve as a focal point on which the different dimensions of Buddhist thought converge". Mi pham's analysis of the MAL con-

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[13]don de gnyis la blos 'jal tshul phyin ci log dang/ phyogs tsam dang/ yang dag par rtogs tshul gyis phyi nang so so'i grub mtha' sna tshogs byung ste/ V. p.18.
[14]Guy Newland bases his book *Appearance and Reality: the Two Truths in the Four Buddhist Tenet Systems* (Snow Lion, Ithaca, 1999) on exactly this principle.
[15]dve satye samupāśritya buddhānāṃ dharmadeśanā/ lokasaṃvṛtisatyaṃ ca satyaṃ ca paramārthataḥ// ye 'nayorna vijānanti vibhāgaṃ satyayordvayoḥ/ te tattvaṃ na vijānanti gambhīraṃ buddhaśāsane//
[16]Eckel (1987:26).

sequently places the work at the centre of the broad spectrum of Buddhist concerns.

Since the difference between the two outlines is largely one of emphasis, one of the keys to unravelling it, as we have already seen, may relate to the respective contexts in which the commentaries were composed and to which they responded. The following section, which describes the contextual situation in which Śāntarakṣita composed the MAL, will therefore serve a number of purposes. It will help to elucidate some reasons for the difference between these outlines *(sa bcad)*; it will set the stage for understanding the opponents Śāntarakṣita was attempting to refute; and it will contribute to an understanding of the affiliations of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas, our ignorance of which Conze (1961:239) once deplored.

III.3 The questions addressed by the MAL

There are two levels of questioning within the MAL: the big, broad questions, and questions of detail that lie within the former broad categories. So for example, the broad question 'what is meant by ultimate and relative truth?' spawns several questions of detail such as 'what is the nature of *dharma*-s?' (verses 2-15). Similarly, the broad question 'what is the nature and process of perception?' (verses 16-60) includes several detailed discussions such as 'is perception endowed with aspects? And if so, how do they work?' and so on. While Śāntarakṣita does not ask direct questions in his text, so concise is it, his discussions *imply* certain questions. Drawing from Mi pham's commentary, we find these questions to be the following:

1. To what categories of purported existents does non-inherent existence *(niḥsvā-bhava)* apply?
    a) Refuting the existence of unconditioned *dharma*-s (verses 2-8)
    b) Refuting the existence of the person or *pudgala* (verse 9)
    c) Refuting the existence of conditioned *dharma*-s, with particular referenc
    e to the relationship between wholes and parts (verses 10-15, 61-62)
    d) Refuting the existence of the mind. For this, he asks:
    - what is the nature of consciousness? (verses 16-19)

- do indivisible moments of consciousness exist? (verses 22-34, 44-60)
- how should we understand 'aspects' in perception? (verses 20-21)
- how does consciousness relate to objects of perception? (verses 22-43, 46- 60)

3. What is to be understood as relative and ultimate truth, and how do they relate to each other? (verses 63-97)
4. What is the relationship between Yogācāra and Madhyamaka? (verses 83-97) What is their doctrinal common ground? What are the fundamental differences between them? How can they be classified in relation to each other?

Many of these questions had been debated for centuries before Śāntarakṣita. Discussion of the existence of the *pudgala*, for example, in the written literature alone goes back at least to the *Kathāvatthu,*[17] that is, to approximately 200 B.C.E. Similarly, the status of unconditioned *dharmas* was debated at an early stage between Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrantikas, and was also examined by Nāgārjuna.[18] Other questions, whether of ancient origin or not, are known to have been live contemporary issues on account of the re-interpretation of the Abhidharma by the Yogācāra school. This category includes the discussions relating to consciousness and epistemology which had been studied just before Śāntarakṣita by both wings of the Yogācāra school, and which had prompted a split within the Yogācāra Abhidharmikas around a century before him.[19] The question concerning the definition of the Two Truths was also current in his time, since the differing positions of Bhāvaviveka, Buddhapālita, Candrakīrti, Jñānagarbha and so on had not found any clear resolution. Finally, the last main question, that of the relationship between Yogācāra and Madhyamaka, had not previously been comprehensively and systematically addressed.

Although it will become clear that a number of the refutations made by Śāntarakṣita are not new and show significant borrowing from his predecessors, nevertheless the striking feature of the MAL is the way all the refutations it makes, new and old, use just one

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[17]*Kathāvatthu,* chapter 1.
[18]MMK, chapters XV and XXV.
[19]See section III.4.3 below. The two wings are that following Asaṇga and that following Dignāga and Dharmakīrti.

single argument. The effect of using only one argument to refute all categories of existent is more than economical, and is more than literary unity. It shows an extraordinary confidence in the universal application of the Mādhyamika view, and it also reflects the profound simplicity of the Mādhyamika view itself. Whatever the philosophical antecedents of the MAL, Śāntarakṣita's voice is exceptionally strong and quite unique.

III.4 Śāntarakṣita's intellectual context

III.4.1 The relevance of context

There are several ways of contextualizing the intellectual climate in which Śāntarakṣita was working. For example, one can relate it to the historical socio-political situation prevailing in India at that time, and gauge the impact of this on his work. In fact, this route is rarely taken by Buddhologists. As Paul Williams (1983:138) pointed out in 1983, "it does seem that too little attention is paid generally to the political/social context of Oriental philosophical ideas",[20] although it must be said that the work of Richard Gombrich has since gone some way to redress this imbalance.[21] The notion nevertheless persists that historical context is irrelevant to philosophy itself.[22] One can also try to situate Śāntarakṣita within the broad history of intellectual movements in India. This will enable us to see the key ideas that influenced his thought, as well as the role he himself played in shaping Indian and Buddhist thought. Another useful approach consists in focusing on the develop ment of specific topic areas, allowing us to identify Śāntarakṣita's particular contribution to the doctrinal and philosophical debates that were current in his time. This study takes all three approaches. The socio-political context was considered in Chapter II.

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[20]In the course of discussion, Paul Williams has argued that context is crucial to our understanding of philosophies if we are to avoid naive comparisons between, say, Indian Buddhists and twentieth century thinkers.

[21]See for example his *Theravāda Buddhism* and his *How Buddhism Began.*

[22]See Chatterjee (1962:vii-viii). "Not that such a chronological study is uninteresting or unimportant; it is simply that in a morphological analysis of any metaphysics, chronology of dates and events is absolutely beside the point."

It can be objected that such an attempt to contextualize Śāntarakṣita's work runs counter to the Buddhist, or indeed Indian, tradition, and is therefore inappropriate. There is a view of philosophy which holds that it is an ahistorical inquiry into the nature of things as they are, and this was indeed the self-understanding of Indian thinkers as well as thinkers in ancient Greece.[23] The idea that a thinker's perspective is to some extent at least dependent on his situatedness is a modern one. Yet even in India thinking was not static, and al-though the tradition offered a stable framework for critical reflection, nevertheless there was room for differing interpretations of tradition. As Mohanty (ibid.) puts it, the historicity of thinking was never thematised, even though it was operative. What we are doing here, then, is bringing into self-awareness the historical and cultural specificity of Śāntarakṣita's work.

III.4.2 Śāntarakṣita and the emergence of the *darśana*-s

Śāntarakṣita lived at a critical point in the general development of Indian philosophical schools, and indeed he himself played a significant role in their development. The usual Sanskrit term translated by 'philosophical school' is *darśana*.[24] Etymologically, the word derives from the root *dṛś* meaning 'to see'. *Darśana* means 'sight', 'vision' or 'perspective'. From this generic meaning, it came to denote seeing the truth. The earliest use of the word as 'true philosophical knowledge' has been traced to the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras* (ix.ii.13) which were probably written before 80 C.E.[25] But it was only in the 5th century C.E. that the term was used to denote what we might call self-consciously developed philosophical systems. The Jain scholar Haribhadra[26] was the first to employ it in this way in his

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[23]Mohanty (1992:276-7).

[24]Most authors writing on Indian philosophy consider the meaning of this term. The discussion here is based on the following sources: Dasgupta (1922:1:68,277); Radhakrishnan (1923:43-44; Mohanty (1992:8-10, 170, 227); Nakamura (1975:76); King (1999:33-40, 44-45). The alternative term *ānvīkṣikī* refers more narrowly to philosophical systems based solely on reason.

[25]Dasgupta (1922:280). By contrast, Halbfass (1992:69-70) is more circumspect about the dates of Kaṇāda, the mythical author of the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra.*

[26]Richard King (1999:45) has mistaken the 5th century Jain author of the *Saddarśanasamuccaya* for the 8th

Saddarśanasamuccaya, and soon after Bhāvaviveka (c.490-570) used it in this same sense in his *Madhyamakahṛdayakārikā*, which is the earliest extant Buddhist source reviewing the doctrines of several Indian schools.[27] This sense of the term is now widely accepted on account of its use much later, in 1331, by the Hindu Mādhava in his classic exposition of Indian philosophical schools, the *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*.

Although *darśana* can be translated as 'philosophical system', its meaning is more complex than the English rendering would suggest. As a result of its etymology, it denotes in the first instance a perception of truth, and following from that it denotes the systematic and logical elaboration of that truth that has already been grasped.[28] Furthermore, it has a third layer of meaning which includes the elaboration of the logical principles used to justify the cognitive claims that are being made. Mohanty (1992:227) summarises these three facets of *darśana* as follows:

> *A philosophical theory or* darśana *not only elaborates a view about the nature of things, but also backs up this account with a theory of evidence, rational justification, and critical appraisal. It not only uses such evidence, rational justifications, and critical appraisals, but also has a theory of these theoretical practices—that is to say, a theory of rationality.*

The key difference between this and what we understand nowadays to be philosophy could be that the Indian philosopher is not searching for truth, but expounding truth as he sees it. The perception of truth antedates its philosophical, discursive elaboration. In this

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century Buddhist Mādhyamika Haribhadra. This mistake leads him to deduce an erroneous chronology for the early texts that use this meaning of *darśana*.

[27]See Ruegg (1981:62).

[28]Mohanty (1992:8): "Indian *darśana* is systematic elaboration of truth, or an aspect of it, which has already been grasped; it is not search for truth but exposition of it, intellectual vindication, conceptual fixation, and clarification of what has been received." It is of interest to note that the Tibetan term for 'tenet' (*grub mtha'*; *siddhānta*) as applied specifically to Buddhist systems has similar connotations. Guy Newland (1999:12) explains that it means 'established conclusion', "and thus a proponent of tenets is not a person who is merely sympathetic with a certain position; it is a person who knows it to be correct and intends not to give it up." This is because "to qualify as a proponent of a particular system, it is necessary actually to realize the selflessness taught by that system." This discussion is particularly pertinent in Śāntarakṣita's case, when one considers the significance of the highest ultimate which is non-conceptually realized, and the concordant ultimate which puts that realization as best as it can into words. All Dharmic discourse, including *śāstras* such as this one, pertains to the concordant ultimate.

important respect *'darśana'* is not exactly synonymous with 'philosophy'. But does this definition of *darśana* clarify the relationship between yogic perception and philosophical discourse, or only confuse it further? It is helpful in the sense that meditative perception could be called the basis of a philosophy, the fundamental view that is being expounded. However, one must be careful not to overextend this meaning of *darśana*.

> *At the beginning of a* darśana *there is no intuited first principle (the etymology of 'seeing' here is misleading). There is, rather, a point of view as encapsulated in the texts. There are texts behind texts.*[29]

Whatever the primary insight on which a *darśana* is based, it is not that of the so-called founder of the *darśana*, but an understanding expressed in the tradition's texts. The *darśana* is then a new interpretation of traditional texts, not a new point of departure. The assumption is that the tradition encapsulates a true perception, and the philosopher's task is to re-express it, elaborate on it or re-interpret it; this is the dynamic quality of tradition.

Generally speaking, care is needed when assessing the doxographic situation in 8th century India in order not to impose later ideas and classifications uncritically, in particular the classifications made by later Tibetan writers. For example, it has been shown that the terms *'Prāsaṅgika'* and *'Svātantrika'* are unknown in the Indian literature of the 8th century.[30] If we consider the incidence of these terms within the actual body of Buddhist commentarial works the appellation *rang rgyud pa* (Svātantrika) is first attested in the *Madhyamakāvatāraṭīkā* of Jayānanda[31] in the second half of the 11th century, while the appellation *'thal 'gyur ba'* (Prāsaṅgika) is not attested until Tsong kha pa (1357-1419).[32] That is, the terms date from a later period.[33] As for the term 'Madhyamaka' itself, referring to a distinct philosophical school, it is not attested within the body of Indian

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[29]ibid., p.296.
[30]Mimaki (1982:44-5); Ruegg (1981:58).
[31]It should however be noted that the Sanskrit of this work is lost, so this is not evidence of the actual term in Sanskrit.
[32]See Yotsuya (1999:xi-xii); Mimaki (1982:45-7). In his *Lam rim chen mo*, Tsong kha pa organises his discussion on the methods employed in Madhyamaka in terms of two branches, Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika.

works (as distinct from their titles) until Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā Madhyamakavṛttiḥ* in the 7th century.[34] The distinct existence of the school by this time is corroborated by testimonial evidence, since according to I-ching's report from India, dated to 691C.E., Mahāyāna was then divided into two schools: Yogācāra and Madhyamaka.[35] So it appears that in Śāntarakṣita's time, the idea of Madhyamaka as a distinct philosophical school was relatively recent but certainly accepted, and although there were doctrinal differences between individual Mādhyamikas the idea of separate subschools had not emerged since we find no terms for such. The situation was therefore much more open than subsequent appellations would suggest.

If we turn now to references in the doxographical literature, we see that the emergence of the *darśana*-s as self-consciously distinct schools of thought and practice was slow and somewhat confused. The first extant Buddhist work to review a number of different schools under one cover was Bhāvaviveka's *Madhyamakahṛdayakārikās* (MHK) with his autocommentary the *Tarkajvālā* in the 6th century. He distinguishes the Śrāvakas, Yogācāra, Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika, Vedānta and Mīmāṃsā, and also expounds his own (Madhyamaka) views, giving a scheme of six Indian schools, three of which are Buddhist. This work seems to contain the earliest known reference to the term *vedānta*[36] indicating that the non-Buddhist schools, too, were still in formation. Chronologically, the next major Buddhist work to follow Bhāvaviveka's model was Śāntarakṣita's own TS in the 8th century. The TS, however, is organised along thematic lines, possibly because this is more useful for debating purposes. It distinguishes six non-Buddhist schools: the Nyāya-

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See also *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* by Tsong kha pa, vol.1, Snow Lion, Ithaca, 2000, p.21.

[33]Jundo Nagashima's recent research on the Doxography of the late Indian Madhyamaka (see bibliography) has not uncovered any evidence that would put this conclusion in doubt.

[34]See Ruegg (1981:1,n.71).

[35]Cited by Nagao (1991:xi).

[36]See Ruegg (1981:62n), and V.V. Gokhale and H. Nakamura IIJ 2 (1958:165-89).

Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya, Jaina, Advaita, and Lokāyata materialists, showing that significant progress had been made over the 7th and 8th centuries in clarifying the respective positions of each school as they grew self-consciously distinct.

It is only immediately after Śāntarakṣita that one finds the first doxographic acknowledgement of two distinct Madhyamaka schools in the *lTa ba'i khyad par* composed by the scholar and translator Ye shes sde around 800 C.E.[37] This is the first extant Tibetan work of the *grub mtha'* type[38] to continue the tradition of philosophical compendia that began in India with the Jain Haribhadra and Bhāvaviveka. Ye shes sde[39] distinguishes between Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka (*mdo sde pa'i dbu ma* and *mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma*) and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka (*rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma*) which he relates respectively with the names of Bhāvaviveka and Śāntarakṣita.[40] A similar distinction is also made in another early work, the *lTa ba'i rim pa'i yi man ngag snang ba bcu bdun* by dPal brtsegs (780-820).[41] The criterion used to justify the difference is whether the existence of an external object *(bāhyārtha; phyi rol gyi don yod pa)* is maintained or rejected on the relative level *(saṃvṛti; kun rdzob).*[42]

From this evidence, then, it would seem that for scholars in the 8th/9th centuries, the MAL[43] was recognized as the work that so clearly set out the Yogācāra view of the non-

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[37]This date is given by Ruegg (1981:59). Ye shes sde was a disciple of Śāntarakṣita.
[38]See Ruegg (1981:211); Mimaki (1982:40).
[39]Ruegg (1981:59) and Ruegg (1981b:215ff). In this second work, Ruegg presents a detailed analysis of the work by Ye shes sde. The relevant passage is cited by Mimaki (1982:40n). *ā tsā rya Bha byas mdzad pa la ni mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma zhes btags/ ā tsā rya Śā nta ra kṣi tas mdzad pa la ni rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma zhes btags so/* "We call Sautrantika-Madhyamaka that which is established by the *ācārya* Bhavya, [and] we call Yogācāra-Madhyamaka that which is established by the *ācārya* Śāntarakṣita."
[40]Matsumoto (1981) interprets these Tibetan terms as references to the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the *Yogācāra-bhūmi* respectively, but both Mimaki and Ruegg follow the traditional Tibetan interpretation. See Mimaki (1982:41n).
[41]Ruegg (1981:59); Mimaki (1982:41-2). There are two identical works in the bsTan 'gyur under different titles: the *lTa ba'i rim pa bzhad pa* (P. [144] (5843) ngo 139b7-142a4) and the *lTa ba'i rim pa'i man ngag snang ba bcu bdun.*
[42]Ye shes sde's treatise begins with a section on schools that accept the existence of an external object. See Ruegg (1981b:215). See also Ruegg (1981:59).
[43]This work is specifically referred to by title in Ye shes sde's treatise. See Ruegg (1981b:217).

existence of external objects on the relative level as to necessitate a demarcation from Bhāvaviveka's interpretation of Madhyamaka. So, very soon after it was written the MAL was considered a text that expressed a new but comprehensive view of how things are. Publication and translation of the MAL therefore constitute the point from which two distinct subschools of Madhyamaka became identified as such. The pivotal role played by the MAL in this context is noted by Mi pham.

> *"In this text [i.e. the* Madhyamakālaṃkāra*], relative phenomena are posited in accordance with the Cittamātrin [view] and [thus this text] inaugurates for the first time the vehicle of Yogācāra-Madhyamaka."* [44]

Mimaki (1982:27-54) has shown how Tibetan doxographers varied in the way they chose to divide up the different Madhyamaka theories into separate schools. No scholar has a more uncertain position than Jñānagarbha,[45] Śāntarakṣita's teacher, which arguably shows that his work reflects a tradition in transition. Alternatively, Jñānagarbha may have deliberately adopted different viewpoints for different audiences.[46] The position of Śāntarakṣita himself is more stable since he is consistently associated with the Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas. As for his classification according to the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction, this is not so clear. Ye shes sde made no such distinction at all. dBus pa blo gsal does make a separate such distinction on the basis of the logical methods used, but does not cite Śāntarakṣita as an exponent of either. It appears that the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction was combined with the Yogācāra/Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka distinction only *after* Tsong kha pa.[47] So in order to characterize Śāntarakṣita's thought, it is important to

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[44]gzhung 'dir ni tha snyad kyi 'dod tshul sems tsam pa dang mthun par bzhed pas dbu ma rnal 'byor spyod pa'i shing rta'i srol dang por phye bar mdzad pa yin no/ V. p.27:1-3.

[45]For example, Bu ston (1290-1364) and Go rams pa (1429-89) classify Jñānagarbha as a Yogācāra-Mādhyamika, while late dGe lugs pas like Se ra rje btsun pa chos kyi rgyal mtshan and 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa classify him as a Sautrantika-Mādhyamika. dBus pa blo gsal (14th century) includes him amongst the *'jig rten grags sde spyod pa'i dbu ma pa*-s alongside Candrakīrti.

[46]He is said to have written the SDV from the Svātantrika point of view, and his commentary on the *Saṃdhinirmocana sūtra* from the Yogācāra point of view. Ruegg (1981:68-9) and Eckel (1987:31-4) see the texts as philosophically conflicting and suggest they may have different authors. But John Powers (1998:3-6) suggests that the same author wrote the texts for different audiences. Whatever the case, Jñānagarbha is difficult to classify doxographically.

[47]Mimaki (1982:45-7).

acknowledge that he himself was not aware of any doctrinally significant difference between Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika features. Yet it is quite clear that what he definitely did have in mind, and expressed explicitly in the MAL, was the distinction between Madhyamaka and Yogācāra.

III.4.3 Relationship with Yogācāra

The Yogācāra school is far less well known to Western scholars.[48] In his comprehensive review of Yogācāra scholarship, Dan Lusthaus[49] notes that this may be set to change since several Tibetologists[50] have shown interest in Yogācāra sources. In particular, and of interest to the present study since Mi pham was a rNying ma pa, he adds that recent developments in Tibetan studies are significant in this respect.

> *Now that Western scholars are beginning to look beyond the minority dGe lugs pa school towards other forms of Tibetan Buddhism, such as rNying ma and rDzogs chen - in which Yogācāra and Chinese Yogācāra influence is more prevalent - we may expect an increase in interest in Yogācāra.*[51]

For the purposes of this study, it is unnecessary to explore the early development of the school since it was recognized at least by the 6th century—that is, some two hundred years before Śāntarakṣita—when it was presented by Bhāvaviveka in his MHK. The classic formulation and hence the 'foundation' of Yogācāra is ascribed to Asaṅga (310-90?) and Vasubandhu, said to be his younger brother.[52] Thereafter the school's history is recounted in different ways according to whether one follows the East Asian or Tibetan tradition. According to the former,[53] after Vasubandhu the school developed in two

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[48]Paul Williams (1989:83).

[49]*'A Brief Retrospective of Western Yogācāra Scholarship in the 20th Century'*, paper presented to the 11th International Conference on Chinese Philosophy, Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan, July 26-31, 1999. Published under the same title in *Chinese Philosophy Beyond the Twentieth Century*, eds. Vincent Shen and Wen-Shen Wang, Wu-Nan Cultural Enterprise, Taipei, 2001.

[50]For example Wayman (1984), Tatz (1986), Guenther (1975), Sparham (1993) and Hopkins (1999).

[51]Lusthaus, op.cit.

[52]For a discussion on Vasubandhu's dates, and the question of two Vasubandhus, see Anacker (1984:7-13).

[53]Both are mentioned by Dan Lusthaus in *'What is and Isn't Yogācāra'*, www.human.toyogakuen-u.ac.jp/acmuller/yogacara/intro-uni.htm. This article has also been published under the subject title of 'Yogācāra' in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 1998.

distinct directions: a logico-epistemic tradition, exemplified by Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita and Ratnakīrti; and an Abhidharmic psychology exemplified by Sthiramati, Dharmapāla, Hsuan-tsang and Vinītadeva. Tibetans tended to view the logico-epistemological tradition as distinct from Yogācāra proper and closer to the Sautrāntika school; for them, the Yogācāra school consisted of only the second of these two directions.[54] This second approach will be followed here. It follows that if Tibetan doxographers regarded Śāntarakṣita as a proponent of Yogācāra-Madhyamaka, as mentioned, this must mean that they did not see his Yogācāra affliliation in terms of his use of logic, but in his approach to psychology and the nature of the mind. Whichever tradition one follows, it is acknowledged[55] that after Asaṅga and Vasubandhu two subschools emerged, and both are addressed by Śāntarakṣita in the MAL: the Sākāravādins and the Nirakāravādins, that is, those who assert that the 'aspects' (*rnam pa; ākāra*) that appear in perception are truly existent, and those who do not. The fact that Śāntarakṣita addressed this issue in some detail (verses 22-60) indicates that he was offering a solution to a thorny issue that was very live in his time.

Of relevance to this study is the distinction made by a number of contemporary scholars between the 'original' Yogācāra doctrine found in the scriptures, and later philosophical theories developed by Sthiramati, Dharmapāla and others. For example, Richard King (1994: 659-683) and Janice Willis (1982:21) argue that the theoretical positions of the late philosophers on such questions as the existence of the mind were quite different from those of Asaṅga, Maitreyānātha and Vasubandhu. At the root of this critique lies a reading of Yogācāra which holds that the concerns of the 'original' texts were epistemological, and were (mis-)interpreted by later commentators as ontological.[56] Insofar as

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[54]The Tibetan categorization of the Yogācāra and logical schools as being distinct may reflect the situation that prevailed in India from the 8th century onwards. The Chinese categorization, by contrast, is based on the way things were two or three centuries earlier.
[55]Williams (1989:94).

Mādhyamikas criticise Yogācāra precisely on the grounds of their ontology,[57] these scholars maintain that the Mādhyamika critique of Yogācāra is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of its enterprise. Lusthaus puts it this way:

> *Yogācāra doctrine is summarised in the term* vijñaptimātra, *'nothing but cognition'...which has sometimes been interpreted as indicating a type of metaphysical idealism, i.e. the claim that mind alone is real and that everything else is created by mind. However, the Yogācāra writings themselves argue something very different. Consciousness* (vijñāna) *is not the ultimate reality or solution, but rather the root problem. This problem emerges in ordinary mental operations, and it can only be solved by bringing those operations to an end.*
>
> *Yogācāra tends to be misinterpreted as a form of metaphysical idealism primarily because its teachings are taken for ontological propositions rather than as epistemological warnings about karmic problems. The Yogācāra focus on cognition and consciousness grew out of its analysis of* karma, *and not for the sake of metaphysical speculation.*[58]

The idea here is that certain later Yogācāra writers mistook Asaṅga's words for metaphysical statements rather than phenomenological descriptions of the process of unenlightened cognition. And as soon as this shift to metaphysics occurs, Yogācāra assertions become unacceptable to Mādhyamikas. This is highly significant, for it is precisely because Śāntarakṣita was not a victim of this misunderstanding that he was able to appreciate Yogācāra on the relative level, as the best available phenomenological description of the cognition process known to him, while at the same time leaving the metaphysical domain to Madhyamaka. So in this regard, Śāntarakṣita pre-empted the recent re-evaluation of Yogācāra, and developed its implications further than contemporary scholars have done thus far.[59] From the discussion here, one can see just how brilliant was Śāntarakṣita's intuition of accepting Yogācāra in relative truth and Madhyamaka in ulti-

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[56]The debate on how to interpret Yogācāra is still open, and other scholars such as Paul Williams do not share this view. Williams (2000:154ff) argues that Yogācāra has always been concerned with ontology. Curiously, if such an epistemology/ontology distinction is indeed justified within Yogācāra, it was never recognized byTibetan doxographers, let alone by early Western scholars or by Mi pham.

[57]This is actually Śāntarakṣita's key argument in verse 92 of the MAL: although he advocates Yogācāra theories of the mind in relative truth, he does not hold that mind exists ultimately—implying that Yogācārins do.

[58]*What is and isn't Yogācāra,* op.cit.

[59]Indeed, Paul Williams believes that this contemporary school of Yogācāra interpretation is itself based on a Mādhyamika perspective, dissolving any fundamental differences between the schools, and aligning itself as a result with the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka point of view. See Williams (2000:263, n.25).

mate truth, and equally one can appreciate how important such an understanding is for Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism as a whole.

Mi pham's characterization of the Cittamātra *(sems tsam)* school follows the Madhyamaka analysis:

> *As for the Cittamātrins, [they regard] the non-existent and merely imputed appearances of subject and object as relative. The basis* (snang gzhi) *of these [appearances] is the dependent nature* (gzhan dbang) *which ultimately is pure consciousness, self-knowing and self-illuminating. [They regard] as ultimate the 'utterly existent nature'* (yongs grub) *which is [the mind] empty of perceived extra-mental object and perceiving subject.[They think that] if there is no consciousness [to act] as the basis* (snang gzhi) *for the phenomenal appearances of* saṃsāra *and* nirvāṇa, *[the latter would be as] non-existent as a sky-lotus. They [therefore] regard [the pure self-knowing] mind alone as an ultimate reality.*[60]

III.4.4 The Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis

In his review of Indian Madhyamaka literature, David Seyfort-Ruegg (1981:87) places Śāntarakṣita in the last period of development of the Indian Madhyamaka school, and notes that he is often regarded as the founder and leading exponent of a philosophical school which synthesised Yogācāra and Madhyamaka. Indeed, a general feature of Indian Mahāyāna in the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries was its tendency for synthesis with other traditions. Several Buddhist masters brought together Madhyamaka and Vajrayāna, for example, and in fact Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla were both Vajrayānists in addition to being Mādhyamikas.[61] Furthermore, Ruegg notes a doctrinal synthesis of Madhyamaka and the Prajñāpāramitā teaching as found especially in the tradition of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. He traces this back to Ārya Vimuktisena in the 6th century. One of the most important proponents of this synthesis was Haribhadra, said by Tāranātha (108A) to

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[60]sems tsam pa ni/ gzung 'dzin gnyis su snang ba 'di med bzhin kun tu btags pa tsam yin pa'i kun rdzob/ de dag gi snang gzhi gzhan dbang gi rnam shes mthar thug pa shes pa rang rig rang gsal tsam/ phyi rol gzung ba dang der 'dzin pas stong pa ni yongs grub ste don dam pa yin la/ 'khor 'das gnyis kyi snang cha 'di rnams la snang gzhi rnam shes zhig kyang med na nam mkha'i me tog ltar 'gyur ro snyam du rnam rig tsam don dam du smra'o/ V p.23.

[61]Ruegg (1981:106). It should be remembered that Śāntarakṣita is given as the author of a Tantric work in the *bstan 'gyur* (see Chapter II above).

be a disciple of Śāntarakṣita. It follows, then, that two of these syntheses already existed in Śāntarakṣita's lifetime and were known to him; and arguably even the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis had also begun before him.

From these various strands of evidence, it seems that two opposite trends were taking place in the 7th and 8th centuries. On the one hand, a clearer doxographic demarcation was gradually being made between the various *darśana*-s in India, both Buddhist and non Buddhist, while on the other hand efforts were made to bring distinct traditions together. This may reflect two deeper currents that run through Indian philosophy as a whole: the practical need for doxographic labelling, especially for the sake of clarity in the context of public debates, and the tendency to consider with great tolerance that different views are just so many facets of an abiding truth.[62] One should note, however, that the evidence suggests that Śāntarakṣita's interpretation of Yogācāra is a subsequent development, and not a reflection of Asaṅga or Vasubandhu's intentions, as the modern American stress on tolerance implies.

The case of the two schools of Yogācāra and Madhyamaka illustrates this point when we consider the pivotal role played by Bhāvaviveka. For many centuries these two traditions were not adversaries but, on the contrary, were intimately linked.[63] For example, some of the earliest commentaries on Nāgārjuna were by important Yogācārins such as Asaṅga, Sthiramati and Guṇamati, implying that Nāgārjuna's works were considered fundamental to the Mahāyāna as a whole and not only to one particular school.[64] The idea of emptiness *(śūnyatā)* was inherited by the Yogācārins from Nāgārjuna and formed a basis of their

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[62]The Indian tradition has been associated with a 'healthy relativism [in] their perception of the truth', 'genuine doctrinal tolerance', and an 'assimilative' approach to religious tolerance. See Lipner (1994:188-9).
[63]This point is emphasized by Nagao (1991) and King (1994). For more detailed discussion see *The Continuity of Madyamaka and Yogācāra in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism* by Ian Harris, E.J. Brill, 1991.
[64]Ruegg (1981:49). Guṇamati's commentary is no longer extant.

theories, even though their interpretation of emptiness carried many features peculiar to their own school.[65] Also, the 'sixteen kinds of emptiness' that were originally elaborated in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* were developed in detail by the Yogācārins[66] in the *Madhyāntavibhāgabhāśya*. Conversely, the Mādhyamika Bhāvaviveka was strongly influenced by the logical and epistemological theories of the Yogācārin Dignāga.[67] These are examples of the openness and flexibility of doctrinal affliliation. Despite this, there is evidence that by the 6th century doctrinal disagreement between the two schools had become acute.[68] In particular, Bhāvaviveka's view on the Two Truths was attacked by Sthiramati and Dharmapāla and, in turn, Bhāvaviveka criticized the Yogācāra theory of the *paratantra* or dependent nature in his *Jewel in hand treatise* (Chang chen lun, Taishō 1578).[69] As a result, Yogācāra developed in China self-consciously opposed to Madhyamaka doctrines. Nagao (1991:219) writes:

> *In the Sino-Japanese Buddhism of old, the Mādhyamika school, represented by San-lun-tsung, and the Vijñānavāda, represented by the Fa-hsiang-tsung, are assumed to be mutually antagonistic to each other in that the former advocates the teaching of non-being or* śūnyatā, *while the latter, the teaching of being or existence. Such an assumption is apparently a misunderstanding, or at least an over simplification of the tenets of these two schools.*

At a time when doctrines were being more clearly distinguished from one another, and when public debates grew in importance, it may have appeared more significant to emphasize the differences between schools rather than their common ground.

Unfortunately, for present-day scholars of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, the status of Yogācāra

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[65]Nagao (1991:51-2). For example, the *Tattvārtha* chapter of Asaṅga's *Bodhisattvabhūmi* on *śūnyatā* (Willis, 1979).
[66]Nagao (1991:239 n.3) and the section on the sixteen types of *śūnyatā* in Sthiramati's *Madhyāntavibhaga-ṭīkā* (Friedmann, 1937:70-80).
[67]Commentators disagree about whether Dignāga was a Sautrāntika or a Yogācārin. See Dreyfus (1997:49).
[68]Ruegg (1981:65). This contrasts with Conze's view (Conze, 1961:251) that the existence of such a powerful school as that of the Mādhyamika-Yogācārins proves that the two schools could co-exist in harmony. Conze himself acknowledges that at the time he was writing, Western knowledge of Yogācāra was poor.
[69]Ruegg (1981:63).

has been coloured by Tibetan doxologies all of which place the Madhyamaka school above Yogācāra.[70] But it is not at all evident that this was the perception in Śāntarakṣita's time, or in the centuries immediately preceding him. The famous seven-year debate between Candrakīrti and the Yogācārin Candragomī, reported by Tāranātha (fol.69B; 77A-B), ended in deadlock with no clear winner. There is no reason not to assume that in the 8th century Yogācāra and Madhyamaka were viewed as distinct but equally respectable Mahāyāna schools, as the respect shown by Candrakīrti to Candragomī shows they were earlier.

Śāntarakṣita's work marks a turning point in the history of Yogācāra in at least three respects. First, in India the Abhidharma wing of the school atrophied by the end of the 8th century as a result of centuries of entrenched critique[71] and the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis propounded by Śāntarakṣita emerged in its place, alongside the synthesis combining Yogācāra with Tathāgatagarbha thought propounded by Kamalaśīla, Dharmamitra and Abhayākaragupta.[72] Second, it is probably on account of the way that Śāntarakṣita brought Yogācāra and Madhyamaka together that Tibetan doxography placed Madhyamaka above Yogācāra, thereby changing the perceived relationship between the two schools for over a millennium. And third, Śāntarakṣita effectively brought together the two divergent streams of the Yogācāra school—the Abhidharmic and logico-epistemological—into one comprehensive system.

Within this historical context, then, it becomes clear that Śāntarakṣita rejected the radical segregation of Mahāyāna schools and subschools, a trend which had evolved in the two centuries before him, and aimed to establish a strong sense of doctrinal unity. The nature

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[70]Mimaki (1992:8). All gSar ma doxologies give Madhyamaka the highest place amongst Buddhist schools. However, rNying ma and Bon po doxologies place the higher Tantric schools above Madhyamaka.
[71]Lusthaus: *What is and isn't Yogācāra* (op.cit.).
[72]ibid.; Ruegg (1981:95; 102-3).

of the synthesis he developed is thus comparable to those of Madhyamaka-Vajrayāna, Madhyamaka-Prajñāpāramitā and Madhyamaka-Tathāgatagarbha, that wove together threads which had been connected previously, if only unsystematically.[73] Nevertheless, Śāntarakṣita did add to the tradition, he was not merely putting the clock back to some harmonious golden age. For the first time, he presented the relationship between Mahāyāna schools in the context of systematic doxographic description, arguing his case by way of logic and reasoning, and making the doctrinal situation clearer than it had ever been previously.

III.4.5 Madhyamaka and logic

Some scholars believe[74] that one of Śāntarakṣita's innovations in the MAL was his systematic introduction of logic into a Madhyamaka environment, but what is the evidence for this? For Mi pham, in particular, this is one of the ground-breaking features of the MAL.

> *...since the synthesis of the two approaches [i.e. Madhyamaka and Cittamātra] established by reasoning is not found in texts other than this one, this text is highly praised...*[75]

However, Malcolm Eckel (1987:51-58) has argued that Śāntarakṣita's own teacher, Jñānagarbha, had in fact already begun the process of introducing Dharmakīrti's logic and epistemology into Madhyamaka in his *Satyadvayavibhaṅga* (SDV). Indeed, the influence of the logicians on Madhyamaka was particularly pronounced in the 8th century generally, but can be traced back to Bhāvaviveka. It takes two forms: the use of formal logical argument in Madhyamaka treatises, such as the independent inference (*svatantra*

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[73]See Ruegg (1981).
[74]Verbal comment by rDzong gsar mkhyen brtse rin po che, who claims that for the Sa skya school this is seen as Śāntarakṣita's chief contribution to Buddhist thought.
[75]tshul gnyis gcig tu sbyor zhing rigs pas gtan la dbab ba'i gzhung 'di lta bu las gzhan ma byung bas/ 'os med kyi rigs pas gzhung 'di che thang du bsngags par grub bo/ V p.54:18-20.

anumāna) used by Bhāvaviveka; and a shift from ontological concerns to epistemological ones. Thus the term *paramārtha* is defined by Bhāvaviveka in the *Tarkajvālā* as follows:

> *In the word* paramārtha, *the word* artha *means an object of knowledge* (jñeya). *It refers to the object that is to be investigated and understood. The word* parama *means 'supreme'. The compound* paramārtha *[as a* karmadhāraya *compound] can mean ultimate object, in the sense that it is both ultimate and an object, or [as a* tatpuruṣa *compound] it can mean the object of the ultimate, in the sense that it is the object of non-conceptual knowledge, which is the ultimate. Or [as a* bahuvrīhi *compound] it can mean [the cognition] that is consistent with the ultimate object.*[76]

Jñānagarbha takes the term simply as a *karmadhāraya* compound in his own definition, emphasizing its epistemological aspect:

> *"Thus a cognition produced by a three-fold logical mark* (liṅga; rtags) *is ultimate* (paramārtha; don dam), *because it is the ultimate* (parama; dam) *meaning* (artha; don). *The ultimate can also be the object* (artha; don) *that is determined by that [cognition], just as a perception* (pratyakṣa; mgnon sum) *[can be either a cognition or an object].* [77]

Whatever the differences between their views, both writers understand the term as referring to a cognition. As a result, Eckel (1987:52) argues that "for both philosophers, discussion of the Two Truths is primarily a discussion of different epistemological perspectives". This approach can be contrasted with that of Nāgārjuna, for example, whose dedicatory verses to the MMK, and indeed the MMK as a whole, proclaiming the ultimate truth are closer to ontology than to epistemology.

> *"[Whatever is dependently arisen is] unceasing, unborn, not non-existent, not permanent, not coming, not going, without distinction, without identity, and free from conceptual construction."* [78]

Although Eckel does not consider the complexities of Jñānagarbha's interpretation, the epistemological interest is clear. This shift from ontology to epistemology was not unique

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[76]See Eckel (1987:114), and Iida (1980:.82-3) for the Tibetan text:
[77]SDVV 4ab. See Eckel (1987:71). de'i phyir tshul gsum pa'i rtags kyis bskyed pa'i rtogs pa gang yin pa de ni dam pa yang yin la/ don yang yin pas don dam pa'o// des gtan la phab pa'i don kyang don dam pa ste / mgnon sum la sogs pa bzhin du brjod do// Tibetan text in Eckel (1987:156).
[78]anirodhamanutpādamanucchedamaśāṣvataṃ/ anekārthamanānārthamanāgamamanirgamaṃ// Sanskrit text in Inada (1993:38).

to Buddhist thought, and can be found in non-Buddhist schools too, indicating that it was a trend of the time.[79] If we take the characterization of Vedānta, for example, one notable difference[80] between that given by Bhāvaviveka in his MHK and *Tarkajvālā*, and that of Śāntarakṣita in the TS, is that the latter ascribes the cognitive function to the *ātman* while the former does not.[81]

In his study of the SDV, Eckel in fact argues that many of the features held to be characteristic of Yogācāra-Madhyamaka can be found in the works of Jñānagarbha. The implication, of course, is that although Śāntarakṣita is considered the founder of the school, he himself did not innovate as much as we might imagine. It is important for us to look critically at the connections between Jñānagarbha and Śāntarakṣita in order to evaluate the role that the latter played in the development of Buddhist ideas.

III.4.6 The case of Jñānagarbha

Jñānagarbha is said by Tibetan sources to be the teacher of Śāntarakṣita.[82] He himself is said to have been taught by Śrīgupta.[83] The historical connection between Jñānagarbha and Śāntarakṣita is strengthened through circumstantial evidence provided by the Tibetan tradition of classifying the three chief works of Svātantrika Madhyamaka together as the *rang rgyud shar gsum*:[84] the *Satyadvayavibhaṅga*[85] of Jñānagarbha, Śāntarakṣita's

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[79]Even though the opposite trend has already been identified above, namely the move from epistemology to ontology within Yogācāra. If the modern American reading of Yogācāra is correct, both trends would have been active simultaneously, reflecting an unstable relationship between the two domains. In discussion, Paul Williams has pointed out that the unlikelihood of such a situation helps to corroborate his ontological reading of Yogācāra.

[80]See Nakamura (1983:206-257).

[81]TS 329: grāhyalakṣaṇaṃsayutkaṃ na kidhriḍhiha nighate/ nijānapīraṇamo'yaṃ tasmāt sarvaḥ samośyate/ Refuting the Advaita doctrine of *ātman*, the verse states: "There is nothing in this world which is endowed with the character of apprehensibility; and all this is held to be the illusory modification of consciousness."

[82]Roerich (i.34).

[83]Tārānatha (99B).

[84]Ruegg (1981:68-9, n.223); Powers (1998:56, n.6). This can be translated either as "the three [texts] illuminating Svātantrika", or as "the three Eastern Svātantrikas", all three authors being linked with Bengal.

[85]This text and its auto-commentary *(vṛtti)* are not found in the Peking Tripitaka, but in the Sde dge edition. See Powers (ibid.) and Ruegg (ibid.).

Madhyamakālaṃkāra, and Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka*. So the influence of Jñānagarbha on Śāntarakṣita is attested in relation to a teacher-student relationship and by subsequent doxographical analysis.

When we turn our attention to Jñānagarbha's work, we find a surprisingly large number of features in common with the work of Śāntarakṣita. For example, they shared a strong interest in both Madhyamaka and Yogācāra. Both authors wrote separate works on each of these schools: in the case of Jñānagarbha, the *Ārya maitreya kevala parivarta bhāṣya*[86] is a commentary on the *Saṃdhinirmocana sūtra*, one of the main scriptural sources for the Yogācāra school, while Śāntarakṣita wrote the *Samvara viṃśaka vṛtti.*[87] Some of their respective Madhyamaka works have already been cited, notably the SDV and the MAL. Having said that, the two authors express very different views on Yogācāra in the SDV and the MAL. While Jñānagarbha[88] rejects reflexive cognition *(svasaṃvedana)* Śāntarakṣita[89] accepts it. Jñānagarbha's argument against *svasaṃvedana* is aimed at refuting the true existence of consciousness, which he feels *svasaṃvedana* entails, and Śāntarakṣita, too, rejects the true existence of consciousness.[90] But Śāntarakṣita's understanding of cognition and of the nature of reflexive cognition is significantly different from that of his master (discussed in Chapter VIII below). Furthermore, the Yogācāra concepts on which Śāntarakṣita chooses to focus are not the same as those in the SDV. Jñānagarbha makes hardly any mention of the *sākāra/nirākāra* debate which occupies so much of the MAL.

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[86]See *Jñānagarbha's Commentary on Just the Maitreya Chapter from the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra: study, translation and Tibetan text* by John Powers, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, Delhi, 1998. Jñānagarbha's authorship of this work has been questioned by Ruegg (1981:68-9) and Eckel (1987:31-4) on the grounds that the viewpoints of Yogācāra and Madhyamaka are incompatible, and cannot therefore be coherently held simultaneously by any one person. For a discussion of this, see Powers (1998:3-6).
[87]See Chapter II, 1.3.3.d.
[88]SDV 6c: "Because self-cognition is impossible." rang rig rigs pa ma yin phyir//
[89]MAL verse 16. See Chapter VII below.
[90]MAL verses 91-2.

Just as important is Jñānagarbha's immense debt to the logicians, Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, whose ideas and methods he incorporated into the SDV, and in this domain also we find that although Śāntarakṣita's use of logic is widely acclaimed, it was not really new. Some passages in both the SDV and its *vṛtti* directly address questions of logic, like verse 19, for example, which upholds the value of inference.[91] In addition, a number of terms used in the SDV indicate borrowing from Dharmakīrti, in particular *arthakriyā* (causal efficiency), *yathādarśana* (consistent with appearances) and *vyavahāra* (conventional usage).[92] He also uses *avisaṃvāda* (not to be contradicted) to define the ultimate.[93] But Jñānagarbha interprets all these concepts from a Madhyamaka perspective, and the structure of the argument he uses to appropriate such terms could be seen as a dialectical[94] one of affirmation, denial and re-appropriation.[95] It is based on rejecting the ultimate truth of other schools as ultimate, and accepting it as relative by shifting the perspective. Śāntarakṣita applied the same model in verses 91-2 of the MAL, where he accepts Yogācāra in relative truth and Madhyamaka in ultimate truth. Similarly, Jñānagarbha accepts *arthakriyā* not in ultimate truth like Dharmakīrti[96] but in relative truth.[97]

Finally, we should mention another similarity between these two Mādhyamikas, which relates back to our previous discussion on Mi pham's theme of the Two Truths. And that is, that the principal Svātantrika work with which Jñānagarbha is associated is entitled *A*

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[91]SDV 19: "When this happens, there is an inference. Otherwise, there is not. If logicians use such [inferences],who can refute them?" de tshe rjes su dpag pa 'byung// gang gi tshe na gzhan na min// de bas rigs pa smra ba rnams// de skad smra la su zhig 'gog// Eckel (1987:173).

[92]See Eckel (1987:51-58).

[93]SDV 4ab: "Since it cannot be contradicted, reason is ultimate." slu ba med pas rigs pa ni// don dam yin te/ Eckel (1987:113 n.11) points out that the use of *avisaṃvāda* recalls *Pramāṇavārttika* 1.3: pramāṇam avisaṃvādi jñānam; "A means of knowledge is a cognition that cannot be contradicted". However, the term is also found in Nāgārjuna's *Ratnāvalī* (see Lindtner, 1981:203).

[94]Although the conclusion is not a synthesis in the sense of a combining of the previous two points.

[95]Eckel (1987:51-8).

[96]*Pramāṇavārttika* 2.3.

[97]SDVV 8abc: "Mere things are capable of effective action *(arthakriyāsamartha)* that corresponds to appearances *(yathādarśana)*". dngos po tsam gang yin pa ni ji ltar snang ba bzhin du don byed nus pa'i phyir ro// Tibetan text in Eckel (1987:160).

Commentary on the Distinction between the Two Truths (Satyadvayavibhaṅga). Jñānagarbha (SDV 1) begins his work by saying that neither his [Buddhist] predecessors nor other non-Buddhist scholars have understood how to [correctly] distinguish the Two Truths and this is why he intends to set the matter straight. His sentiments indicate that in the centuries before him, and significantly even in his own time, the Two Truths were acknowledged to be an issue of considerable debate. There is therefore some evidence that the theme of Mi pham's *sa bcad* does not merely reflect the concerns of his own day (i.e. the 19th century) but may also reflect those of Śāntarakṣita's time.

In summary, one can show that other Mādhyamikas prior to Śāntarakṣita had brought together Madhyamaka with logic, as well as Yogācāra and Madhyamaka ideas; and furthermore that an established way of integrating other Buddhist views with Madhyamaka was to accept them conventionally while denying them ultimately. Given the antecedents, Śāntarakṣita's thought must be understood within the context of a continuing tradition. However, it would be fair to say that nobody before Śāntarakṣita had applied this model to the relationship of Yogācāra and Madhyamaka in general. He inherited some fundamental ideas and methodologies from his predecessors, particularly from Jñānagarbha, and the uniqueness of his innovation lies not only in the way he applied them to new domains and new issues,[98] but in the way he links these various elements together within the framework of a much bigger picture. In Śāntarakṣita, the synthesis between Madhyamaka and Yogācāra is not so much on the level of 'this detail' or 'that term', it is a sweeping and overarching union of the two as systems.

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[98]In SDVV 19, Jñānagarbha quotes: "What is ultimate for one person is relative for another, just as one person's mother is another person's wife." gzhan gyi don dam byas gang yin// de ni gzhan gyi kun rdzob ste// gzhan gyi mar 'dod gang yin de// gzhan gyi chung mar 'dod pa bzhin// Śāntarakṣita's commentary on this attributes the verse to Nāgārjuna, and glosses it as referring respectively to Yogācārins and Mādhyamikas. (Eckel 1987:137 n.101). We cannot infer that this was Jñānagarbha's own understanding of the quotation, since it appears at the end of a section in which the SDV addresses questions of logic.

III.4.7 Vedānta

Śāntarakṣita's work also stands at a crossroads in relation to the development of Vedānta as an Indian philosophical school. Although the word 'Vedānta' is very old and is found, for instance, in the *Bhagavad Gītā*[99] where it undoubtedly referred to the *Upaniṣads*,[100] the oldest use of the term to denote a systematic school of thought is in Bhāvaviveka's MHK in which he devotes the eighth chapter to a refutation of that view. Vedānta is not mentioned by Buddhist scholars prior to this, and indeed there are no extant Vedānta works prior to Bhāvaviveka that could provide evidence of its earlier existence, although the school was flourishing in his time, that is, in the early part of the sixth century.[101] The Yogācārin scholar Dharmapāla, a contemporary of Bhāvaviveka, refutes the idea of a oneness of self which is prominent in Vedānta, but does not investigate Vedāntic thought systematically.[102] It is not until Śāntarakṣita that a comprehensive refutation is found in the TS, and subsequently in Kamalaśīla's TSP.[103] It is certainly significant that it was only after the publication of these two works that Buddhist refutations of Vedānta became frequent—in texts by Avalokitavrata, Jñānaśrībhadra and Ratnakīrti for example.[104] This reflects the fact that the influence of Vedānta greatly increased after Śāntarakṣita with the work of Śaṅkara whose active period post-dated that of Śāntarakṣita probably by about forty years.[105] When Śāntarakṣita refuted Vedānta, therefore, whether in the TS or in the MAL, he was referring primarily to the work of Gauḍapāda, and not to that of Śaṅkara.

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[99]*Bhagavad Gītā*, 15.5: sarvasya cāhaṃ hṛdi saṃniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṃ ca/ vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo vedāntakṛd vedavid eva cāham/ I dwell in the heart of everyone, memory, knowledge and reason spring from me; I am known through the knowledge of all the Vedas, I make the Vedānta and I know the Veda.

[100]J.A.B. van Buitenen (1981:169 n5).

[101]See *A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy* by H. Nakamura, 1983, pp.214-217.

[102]ibid., pp.219-220.

[103]See TS chapter VII.

[104]See Nakamura (1983:257-8) for details of these passages.

[105]The exact dates for Śaṅkara are disputed. Nakamura examines in detail the dates of Śaṅkara and his near contemporaries, and concludes that their respective active periods were as follows: Śāntarakṣita 680-740, Kamalaśīla 700-750, and Śaṅkara 700-750.

Given that the ideas explored by Vedānta scholars were characteristically prominent in Śāntarakṣita's time and immediately afer him, and since the main themes of Vedānta are the notion of oneness and the ontological relationship between the one and the many, it may be no coincidence that Śāntarakṣita chose to use the neither one nor many argument in the MAL. After all, Śaṅkara called his thought "the theory of non-difference" *(abheda-darśana)*[106] and again "the denial of dualism" *(dvaitavādapratiṣedha)* showing the perceived importance of the one and many theme.[107] Although the 'neither one nor many' argument was not in itself new in Buddhism, it may have seemed particularly apt for that time, and with hindsight its relevance in the context of Vedānta, and of Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta, is remarkable.

III.5 Literary sources

In accordance with our previous analysis, we will now review the main scriptural sources on which Śāntarakṣita drew in composing the MAL. He does not refer to any text by name in this work, nor does he make any explicit quotations, yet the educated reader is able to make a number of connections. In this, we are assisted by quotations in the *vṛtti* as well as in the *pañjikā* and Mi pham's commentary. Ichigō (1985:341-347) has drawn up a table of the textual references relating to the MAL given in the *vṛtti* and the *pañjikā*; these include both scriptures and *śāstras*.

According to Ichigō's analysis, the scripture most frequently referred or alluded to is the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (27 references). No other scripture is referred to with anything like this frequency. Other related sūtric sources are: the *Buddhāvataṁsaka Sūtra* (1 reference); the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra* (1 reference); the *Hastikakṣya Sūtra* (2 references); the *Pitāputra-*

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[106]*Brahmasūtra*, Vol.II, p.209, line 10, cited in Nakamura (1983:119).
[107]*Brahmasūtra* Vol.I., p.279, line 8 in Nakamura (1983:124, n.41).

samāgama Sūtra (4 references); the *Ratnākara Sūtra* (1 reference); the *Ratnamegha Sūtra* (4 references); the *Suttanipāta* (1 reference); the *Sāgaranāgarājaparipṛcchā Sūtra* (1 reference); the *Samādhirāja Sūtra* (5 references); the *Udānavarga* (1 reference); and the *Vajracchedikā* (2 references). In his commentary on the MAL, Mi pham refers to several scriptures in order to elucidate the text: the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, the *Samādhirāja Sūtra*, the *Candrapradīpa Sūtra*, the *Saṁdhinirmocana Sūtra*, the *Buddhāvataṁsaka Sūtra*, the *Lalitavistara Sūtra*, the *Ratnamegha Sūtra*, the *Pitāputrasamāgama Sūtra*, the *Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtras*, and the *Akśayamatiparipṛcchā Sūtra*. In summary, the two main scriptural sources that are directly relevant to the MAL are the *Laṅkāvatāra* and *Samādhirāja Sūtras*, and Mi pham makes the point that these represent authoritative scriptures of the Yogācāra and Madhyamaka schools respectively, showing that Śāntarakṣita was drawing from both traditions.[108]

The MAL appears to be far more closely connected with the textual tradition of the *śāstras* than with the scriptures themselves. Amongst these, there were clearly a number of masters whose works were seen as especially significant. Nāgārjuna, for example, is referred to many times through the MMK, the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, the *Śūnyatāsaptati* and the *Vigrahavyāvartanī*. Dharmakīrti, too, is a conscious source with respect to his *Pramāṇa-vārttika* (24 references are noted by Ichigō). Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* and *bhāṣya* give rise to 18 references. We should also note that the MAL can be related to Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka*, Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*, and Jñānagarbha's SDV and *vṛtti*. Cross-references can also be made with the TS and TSP.

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[108]V p.16. Considering the question of how the text should be classified, Mi pham notes that since there are only two kinds of *sūtras*, Cittamātra and Madhyamaka *sūtras*, and since the MAL refers to both, it is a commentary on the entire Mahāyāna doctrine. mKhan po Pal ldan shes rab adds that the classification of a *śāstra* depends on the kind of *sūtra* on which it is based.

In addition, several references to non-Buddhist authors are acknowledged. The main ones are the *Māṇḍūkyakārikā* by Gauḍapāda (13 references), and the *Ślokavārttika* by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (10 references). The *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* by Kaṇāda and its *vṛtti* by Candrānanda are also attributed 4 references. Vyāsa's *Yogabhāṣya* is referred to once.

For the literary sources mentioned above we are indebted to Ichigō's research, which has been supplemented by our own reading of Mi pham. However, this study does relate specific passages in the MAL with other works not mentioned here, and in particular to those of Asaṅga, Bhāvaviveka, Sthiramati and Dharmapāla. Even though explicit mention may not be made of such authors by Śāntarakṣita or his commentators, it is understood that their works would have been part of Śāntarakṣita's own knowledge of his tradition, and that they therefore constitute legitimate doctrinal references.

III.6 Summary

Śāntarakṣita composed the MAL in northeastern India towards the end of the 8th century. He was heir to a rich corpus of philosophical thought developed by both Buddhist and non-Buddhist scholars for over one thousand years, and his own writings are both a reflection of this legacy and a contribution to the broad tradition. As a contribution to the Indian tradition of public debates, he followed the lead of Bhāvaviveka and the Jain Haribhadra, and substantially clarified the differences between the various philosophical views in India in his TS. Moreover, he was influenced by the 8th century tendency to bring together distinct Buddhist threads into new coherent systems. In the MAL, he followed the lead of his teacher Jñānagarbha in combining the two Mahāyāna vehicles of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra, and at the same time he followed the lead of Bhāvaviveka and Jñānagarbha in assimilating logic and epistemology into Madhyamaka. If Śāntarakṣita is recognized by Tibetan doxographers as the founder of the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-

Madhyamaka tenet system, it is not because he is considered to be the master who first expressed its ideas but the one who elaborated it into a fully fledged system.[109]

The main questions that Śāntarakṣita addressed in the MAL represent the broad range of subjects with which Mahāyāna as a whole had been concerned since its inception. These include, in particular, questions debated between Mahāyāna and so-called Hīnayāna scholars (for instance, the theory of indivisible particles, the existence of self or *pudgala*), and between Mahāyāna scholars and non-Buddhists (the self or *ātman*, the process of perception). Questions that had been discussed internally within the Mahāyāna were debated either within the Madhyamaka school (the meaning of *śūnyatā*, the Two Truths), within the Yogācāra school (the nature of perception, for example the dispute between *sākāravādins* and *nirākāravādins*), or between the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra schools (the meaning of *śūnyatā*, the existence and nature of consciousness). The MAL therefore provides a comprehensive treatment of the entire range of key Buddhist topics.

Before examining in detail the way that Śāntarakṣita addresses his topics, it is necessary to look at the method he uses. Indeed, the MAL is well-known for its unprecedented use of the 'neither one nor many' argument *(ekānekaviyogahetu)* to refute the entire range of topics addressed, and we have already noted the perceived importance of logic in the text. Studying the use of this argument in the MAL will serve as a good example of how Śāntarakṣita took established features in Buddhist discourse, in this case a logical method developed by Mādhyamikas, and gave them new significance simply by deploying them in new ways.

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[109]In fact Tibetans recognize that many of Śāntarakṣita's ideas were also expressed by Ārya Vimuktisena even though he is not credited with founding the school. A similar case applies to the relationship between Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti. See Kangyur Rinpoche (2001:326, n.282). Further research is needed to establish Śāntarakṣita's connection to Vimuktisena and to Śrīgupta in detail.

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CHAPTER FOUR THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT OF MI PHAM'S COMMENTARY

IV.1 Understanding Mi pham's commentarial lens

Since we will use Mi pham's commentary to help us analyse Śāntarakṣita's text, it is important to be aware that Mi pham's own historical and philosophical context was quite different to that of Śāntarakṣita. Mi pham (1846-1912) lived in 19th-century Tibet, that is, in a culture other than that of India, and some one thousand years later than the author of the MAL. This Chapter will therefore briefly set out the main doctrinal influences which shaped Mi pham's thinking so that, in later Chapters, we are better able to appraise Mi pham's critical understanding of the MAL. As the main subject of this thesis is the philosophy of Śāntarakṣita rather than that of Mi pham himself, this contextualisation can only be brief.

IV.2 Identifying the main doctrinal influences on Mi pham

When Buddhism became firmly established in Tibet in the 8th century C.E., it reached that country from three primary source-areas. The main influence was that of Indian Buddhism, represented in the Tibetan histories by the work and contribution of Śāntarak-ṣita. The other two sources of Buddhism to be integrated at this early stage were from Central Asia and China respectively.[1] This historically complex picture of early Buddhism is reflected in the key doctrines that came to characterize Tibetan Buddhism through the centuries. Thus, in addition to the Indian traditions of *pramāṇa (tshad ma)*, Madhyamaka *(dbU ma)*, Cittamātra *(sems tsam)* and Abhidharma *(chos mngon pa)*, Buddhism in Tibet incorporates the tantric scriptural corpus upon which Vajrayāna or

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[1]Evidence for this is to be found amongst the Dun huang manuscripts. See Snellgrove (1987:362 and 402). Dun Huang itself was a major centre of Chinese Buddhism.

Mantrayāna is based. Indeed, one of the main objectives of all major Tibetan authors of both rNying ma and gSar ma schools - up to and including Mi pham - is, in one way or another, to situate the theory and practice of Vajrayāna within dialectical and philosophical discourse, and vice versa.[2] A further doctrinal influence in Tibet is that of the rDzogs chen or Great Perfection teachings, particularly important for rNying ma pas who consider them to be the essence of all Buddhist teachings, and the expression of the highest truth.[3] An additional objective of rNying ma pa authors such as kLong chenpa and Mi pham is therefore to clarify the relation of rDzogs chen to the other yānas and philosophical systems.[4]

Tibetan Buddhism evolved into four main schools - rNying ma, bKa' rgyud, Sa skya and dGe lugs. There is a general tendency to emphasize the differences between these schools, yet they share an enormous amount in common.[5] For example, they all follow the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda vinaya, they all share the same philosophical and liturgical corpus, and they all present a gradual path to enlightenment that incorporates practices of both sūtra and tantra systems. From a doctrinal point of view, it is particularly important to mention that all four schools agree that the mind is of the nature of clear light. Powers (1995:316) notes:

> *All posit various levels of mind that are differentiated in terms of relative coarseness or subtlety, and all agree that the most subtle and basic level of mind is of the nature of pure luminosity and emptiness.*

Each school, however, has different terms for it and teaches different ways of realizing it.

As the present Dalai Lama states:

> *This innate fundamental mind of clear light is emphasized equally in the Highest*

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[2]Pettit (1999:91).
[3]For a discussion of the origins of rDzogs chen and its development in Tibet see Dudjom Rinpoche (1991: 531-598); Karmay (1988), Powers (1995:319-345) and Pettit (1999:77-84).
[4]Pettit (1999:93).
[5]Powers (1995:313).

> *Yoga Tantra systems of the New Translation Schools and in the Nying ma system of the Great Perfection, and is the proper place of comparison of the old and new schools.*[6]

Of course, there are also important differences between the schools, and it is these that tended to emerge in the doctrinal debates between monastic colleges and in the commentaries of Tibetan authors. These debates, and the issues they raised, set the agenda, as it were, for Buddhist thinking, and this was certainly the case for Mi pham. Not only did Mi pham enjoy a privileged historical vantage point, being heir to around a thousand years of Tibetan scholastic exegesis as well as one a half thousand years of Buddhist thought in India, but in addition he was fully trained in the scholastic and meditational traditions of all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism. As a result, he was directly influenced by a broad spectrum of authors, and especially by Tsong kha pa (1357-1419) and his followers; by the Sa skya scholars Go ram pa bSod nams seng ge (1429-1489)[7] and Sa skya mChog ldan (1427-1508); and by his immediate rNying ma teachers 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899) and 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rtse dbang po (1820-1892).

Both the latter teachers were leading figures in the Ecumenical or Non-Sectarian Movement *(ris med)* that flourished around sDe dge, in the eastern Tibetan region of Kham, in the 19th century.[8] Mi pham was their student and colleague, and was himself engaged in this Non-Sectarian approach to Buddhist traditions. Also active in this movement were mChog 'gyur gling pa (1829-1870) and dPal sprul O rgyan 'jig med chos kyi dbang po (1808-1887). The activity of these scholars was prodigious. They compiled texts from disparate traditions in large collections in order to facilitate the preservation of rare

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[6]*Kindness, Clarity and Insight*, p.208.
[7]Although Mi pham does not make any explicit mention of Go ram pa in his *Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me*, Pettit (1999:136) believes one can show several points of influence.
[8]See Pettit (1995:97ff.) and Ringu Tulku (1995). In the 19th century, rNying ma monasteries relied mainly on dGe lugs pa textbooks.

lineages that were in danger of being lost. They also wrote commentaries on major Buddhist works, and clarifications and explanations of many aspects of the Dharma. One of Mi pham's contributions to this effort was to write textbooks *(yig cha)* at the request of 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rste dbang po specifically for the rNying ma tradition.[9] In fact his commentary on Śāntarakṣita's MAL is one of these. The overall objective of Mi pham's mission was to elucidate the unique features of rNying ma doctrine and the Great Perfection teachings, and to help prepare students for the Great Perfection which, for rNying ma pas, is the pinnacle of vehicles.

In summary, then, the key difference between the influences affecting Śāntarakṣita and those bearing upon Mi pham, is that when writing a treatise on Madhyamaka Mi pham set out to clarify, either explicitly or implicitly, the relation between Madhyamaka, Vajrayāna and rDzogs chen. This does not appear to have been the case for Śāntarakṣita who was more concerned with showing the relation between Madhyamaka, Cittamātra and *pramāṇa.*

IV.3 Doctrinal disputes

As we mentioned above, the debates that had taken place between Tibetan scholars over the centuries effectively set the philosophical agenda for Mi pham insofar as he addressed issues of contention that had already been identified before him. Tsong kha pa's Eight Great Difficult Points *(dka' ba'i gnad chen po brgyad)* are an instance of this. In brief, these points are: 1) refutation of the relative existence of the *ālayavijñāna*; 2) negation that things exist by way of their own characteristics; 3) acceptance of external objects; 4) negation of syllogistic proof *(svatantra; rang rgyud)*; 5) refutation of reflexive aware-

[9]Pettit (1999:99).

ness *(svasaṃvitti; rang rig);* 6) affirmation that śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas fully realize both forms of selflessness; 7) the definition of the apprehension of true existence and its tendencies as emotional obscurations *(kleśavaraṇa; nyon mongs kyi sgrib pa)*, and the tendencies of deluded dualistic perception as cognitive obscurations *(jñeyāvaraṇa; shes bya'i sgrib pa)*; and 8) the explanation of how buddhas are aware of the mistaken perceptions of sentient beings without themselves being subject to them.

From the following Chapters of this study, it will be apparent that Mi pham addresses a significant number of Tsong kha pa's Points in his commentary on the MAL. In particular, he examines the *ālayavijñāna*, the acceptance of external objects, the negation of syllogistic proof, the nature of *rang rig*, and the relation between emotional and cognitive obscurations. Given Mi pham's particular philosophical context, it is not unreasonable to infer that the reason that these issues are taken up by Mi pham has less to do with their perceived importance for Śāntarakṣita, and rather more to do with their perceived importance for him and his scholarly contemporaries.

Furthermore, it is generally the case that many of the doctrinal disputes in Tibet stemmed from the different definitions given to ultimate reality by scholars of different schools, and, consequently, from the various ways they had of distinguishing between ultimate and relative truths.[10] The questions raised include: whether emptiness is the only definitive teaching or not; whether the logical character of emptiness, that is, emptiness understood as an absolute negation, is adequate; whether emptiness means 'emptiness of self' *(rang stong)* or 'emptiness of other' *(gzhan stong)*; and whether the relative can be validly cognized. The importance of these questions to Tibetan scholars up to and including those

[10]See, for example, Pettit (1999:103).

who were Mi pham's contemporaries, may help to explain why, in the *sa bcad* to his commentary on the MAL, Mi pham chose to identify the main theme of the MAL as "The Way [of Distinguishing] the Two Truths" *(bden gnyis kyi tshul)*. In this respect he broke from the commentarial tradition established in Śāntarakṣita's *vṛtti* and in Kamalaśīla's *pañjikā* where the main theme is identified as the claim that "all *dharma*-s have neither a unitary nor a multiple nature".[11] Once again, it can be argued that Mi pham's choice was governed by his view of what was important in his own Tibetan context, while Śāntarakṣita's and Kamalaśīla's immediate concerns were quite different.

IV.4 Mi pham's position within the rNying ma school

It is a claim of this thesis that by exploring the interpretation of the MAL developed by Mi pham we are thereby establishing a connection between Śāntarakṣita and the rNying ma school as a whole. Such a statement requires clarification.

The rNying ma pas or Ancient Ones trace the origins of their tradition back to 8th century Tibet and particularly to Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Śāntarakṣita.[12] rNying ma pas share a common scriptural corpus, and in particular, in addition to the corpus common to other Tibetan schools, they accept a separate Tantric canon *(rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum)* compiled in the fifteenth century by Ratna Lingpa. Another characteristic of the rNying ma school is that it accepts the Great Perfection *(rDzogs chen)* teachings as its highest teachings. According to rDzogs chen, reality *(dharmatā; chos nyid)* is not an object of verbal expression or conceptual analysis; it is beyond conceptualisation of any kind. Reason has a soteriological role, but this role has limits in creating religious meaning.

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[11]See the detailed discussion of this point in Chapter III.2 above.
[12]See Dudjom Rinpoche (1991:507ff.); Powers (1995:319-345); Snellgrove (1988); Pettit (1999:74ff).

Being and knowing are not different in ultimate truth; indeed, reality and enlightenment are identical, that is to say that ultimate truth embraces the subjectivity of the one who realizes it. Furthermore, relative and ultimate truths are not ultimately separate; the highest realization is that of the coalescence or union *(yuganaddha, zung 'jug)* of relative and ultimate.

However, John Pettit (1999:98-100) argues that rNying ma scholars do not share a common doctrinal approach in terms of Madhyamaka analysis. For example, Rong zom Paṇḍita (11th-12th century) says that Yogacāra Madhyamaka is the most important school of Madhyamaka (the other being that of Bhāvaviveka);[13] kLong chen pa does not appear to espouse the Yogacāra-Madhyamaka view[14] but Mi pham expresses sympathy for Yogacāra-Madhyamaka in his commentary on the MAL. Likewise, rNying ma scholars are divided between those who are said to advocate the view of 'emptiness of other' *(gzhan stong)* and those who accept the 'emptiness of self' *(rang stong)*. It is therefore difficult to speak of "a rNying ma philosophy" or a "rNying ma view" as far as Madhyamaka is concerned. And in this respect at least, Mi pham's perspective on Madhyamaka, and on Śāntarakṣita in particular, cannot be considered to be representative of a common rNying ma ground.

These arguments notwithstanding, it is undoubtedly correct to say that Mi pham's place in

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[13]In Rong zom's *lTa ba'i brjed byang* (1974: 209-210) it is stated that "the two Madhyamakas [i.e. *mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma* and *rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma*] are dissimilar in their presentations of relative truth. With respect to [adequately presenting] the general systems of sūtra and tantra, the general method of logical argument, and the writings of the root-Mādhyamikas Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, the Yogācāra Madhyamaka system seems to be more important". dbu ma rnam pa gnyis kun rdzob kyi tshul mi mthun pa la/ lung dang rigs pa gang che ba ni rgyud dang mdo sde spyi'i tshul dang/ rigs pa spyi'i tshul dang/ dbu ma'i mkhan po gzhung phyi mo mdzad pa'i slob dpon klu sgrub dang/ ārya de ba'i gzhung ltar na yang rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma'i gzhung don che bar snang ngo/ Cited by Pettit, op.cit., p.90-91.

[14]Most of kLong chen pa's writings on Madhyamaka are now lost, so our understanding of his view must be inconclusive.

the rNying ma school is today universally considered to be exceptionally authoritative. rNying ma pas have always given more importance to the tantric attainments of *yogis* and *siddhas* than they have to the niceties of intellectual debate, and it is the case that the rNying ma tradition has produced far fewer scholars of renown than other Tibetan schools. Accounts of the rNying ma school name just a small number of outstanding scholars: Rong zom Paṇḍita, kLong chen pa, Lo chen Dharmaśrī (1654-1717), 'Jam mgon kong sprul, and Mi pham himself. Even amongst these luminaries Mi pham is exceptional in that his scholarship is renowned in other traditions as well as his own.[15] So although it cannot be claimed that Mi pham's view is an instance of some 'orthodox' rNying ma view on Madhyamaka, it is fair to say that his writings form the basis of study in contemporary rNying ma colleges, and that many of today's rNying ma masters consider Mi pham to be one of the most brilliant and lucid authorities of their school to date.

[15]Pettit (1999:182).

PART TWO

"NEITHER ONE NOR MANY"

CHAPTER FIVE THE 'NEITHER ONE NOR MANY' ARGUMENT

V.1 Introduction

Having reviewed the context in which the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* was composed, it is now time to turn to the text itself. Our examination falls into two main parts. In the present Chapter we analyse the first verse and by so doing uncover many philosophical principles that underlie the body of the treatise. Then in Chapters VI-VIII, we consider the way Śāntarakṣita refutes his various opponents by looking in detail at verses 2-63. Finally, in Chapter IX, we consider Śāntarakṣita's approach to the Two Truths.

The first verse of the MAL is striking. It encapsulates the theme of the entire treatise. Not only that, it introduces what is the only fundamental argument used in the MAL, the argument on which the work is based. The first verse reads:

> **Those entities asserted [as real] by ourselves [i.e. Buddhists] and others**
> **have in reality no intrinsic nature**
> **because they have neither a unitary nor a multiple nature**
> **like a reflection.**
>
> *bdag dang gzhan smra'i dngos 'di dag// yang dag tu na gcig pa dang//*
> *du ma'i rang bzhin bral ba'i phyir// rang bzhin med de gzugs brnyan bzhin//*

The argument in question is usually termed 'the neither one nor many' argument *(gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs; ekānekaviyogahetu).*[1] It is just one of a range of logical arguments deployed by Mādhyamikas, and rests on the premiss that if an entity truly exists, it must be either unitary in nature, or it must have several parts, with no possible third alternative. By means of a systematic examination (in verses 2-60) of all the phenomena that are held to be truly existent either by Buddhists or non-Buddhists, the conclusion is reached that

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[1]The Sanskrit and Tibetan terms are given by Tillemans (1982:103).

no entity can be found that has a unitary nature. The corollary (verses 61-62) is straight-forward: since multiplicity requires the existence of ones, if ones do not truly exist then multiple entities don't either. It follows that no entities can be found that truly exist.

This first verse has already received considerable attention from modern scholars. In particular, Tom Tillemans (1982:103-128; 1983:305-320; 1984:357-388; and 1999:247-284) has studied the classic dGe lugs pa interpretations of this argument in the MAL chiefly in relation to logical considerations. Lopez (1987:167-191; 345-379) presents a broader analysis of the argument based largely on lCang skya's *Presentation of Tenets*, another dGe lugs pa interpretation. Eckel (1987:15-23) has considered some of the precedents for Śāntarakṣita's use of the argument and placed it in the historical context of the development of Indian Madhyamaka. The studies by Ichigō (1985, 1989) and Kajiyama (1978:114-143) also review the main features of the argument according to both the *vṛtti* and Kamalaśila's *pañjikā*. And Lipman (1979:4-8) provides a brief explication of the verse in terms of Prāsaṇgika and Svātantrika views on logic.

The works of all these scholars are directly relevant to any study of Śāntarakṣita, and indeed they cannot be overlooked if one seeks a thorough understanding of him. Nevertheless, the present chapter will not critically review them in detail for several reasons. First, the overall aim of this study is to explore Mi pham's commentary and associated rNying ma readings of Śāntarakṣita, and these therefore have been given priority over dGe lugs pa sources and their related literature. Naturally, this basic principle does not preclude the inclusion of some of these debates at appropriate points of the discussion. Second, the emphasis of Mi pham's commentary is not so much on the logical aspects of the MAL but on its philosophical and soteriological aspects, so the present study will by led by his choice of topics. This approach is not as frequent among the dGe lugs pa

commentators whose treatises have given rise to contemporary research, and this may account for why the authors cited above are usually more concerned with logic than with metaphysics when they analyse the first verse of the MAL. The present chapter will complement the research previously carried out. The approach taken here in no way implies that logic is not important, or that the studies published hitherto have no interest; rather, it is building on, and benefiting from, the work already completed.

It has not been widely acknowledged that there is a tension between the logical and metaphysical aspects of Śāntarakṣita's use of this argument, so the choice of approach is not merely arbitrary. The tension arises from differences in the formulation of what it means to be a Svātantrika. Some criteria defining Svātantrika-Madhyamaka in Tibetan doxology concern the particular use of logical methods, while other criteria relate to philosophical views, especially around the nature of liberation and buddhahood, the distinction between the Two Truths, and the meaning of 'true existence'. Some of these debates were presented in Chapter I. By exploring these themes, we will therefore be led to consider precisely in what way Śāntarakṣita can be considered a Svātantrika.

V.2 Logical grounds for categorizing Śāntarakṣita as a Svātantrika

For dGe lugs pa scholars, the primary criterion for characterizing any scholar as a Svātantrika is a logical one: Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas use autonomous syllogisms *(svatantra prayoga)* as a soteriologically necessary form of argument. Indeed, it is from this logical method that the name of the school is derived as was made clear in Chapter III. This aspect of the MAL has already been intensively studied.[2] It emerges that if logical grounds are the basis for the Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika distinction, then classification of the MAL as a Svātantrika work is uncertain. This is because it is unclear whether the 'neither

[2]See Tillemans (1983); Lopez (1987:55-81; 160-191).

one nor many' argument is used in the MAL as an autonomous syllogism (*svatantra prayoga*; *rang rgyud kyi sbyor ba*) or as a consequence (*prasaṅga*; *thal 'gyur*).

Prasaṅga is defined by Mokṣākaragupta as a "reasoning for bringing out an absurd conclusion which is undesirable to the opponent",[3] one illustration of which is "when we deduce the plurality of a universal, when it is admitted [by the opponent] that a single universal *(sāmānya)* abides in many individuals."[4] This method therefore points out absurdities in the opponent's own argument without thereby putting forward any other viewpoint and requires that the opponent holds the assertion which is shown to be absurd. *Svatantra prayoga* is not a term used by Mokṣākaragupta, writing in around 11th century, who analyses various types of syllogism but does not consider any of them 'autonomous'. Its Tibetan equivalent (*rang rgyud kyi sbyor ba*) was coined subsequently by dGe lugs pa doxographers, and is a complex term denoting not only the logical aspects of syllogistic use but also the particular dGe lugs view of what is meant by relative[5] existence in the works of so-called Svātantrika authors. This view lies behind mKon mchog 'jig med dbang po's definition of a Svātantrika as "a proponent of non-entityness *(ngo bo nyid med pa; niḥsvabhāvatā)* who asserts that phenomena exist by their own character conventionally *(tha snyad du)*".[6] From the logical point of view, the characteristic of a *svatantra*

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[3]*Tarkabhāṣā* 48.11. Translation by Kajiyama (1989:114).
[4]ibid. 48.15; in Kajiyama (1989:117).
[5]The terms *saṃvṛtisatya* and *kun rdzob bden pa* have been translated in this study as 'relative' truth following Lindtner, although Iida, Guenther, Matilal, Newland and others translate it as 'conventional' truth. The reason for this preference is that it then enables us to use the term 'conventional' specifically to designate the truth of everyday transactions *as seen by a buddha*, and as used by a buddha in terms of communicating through language and so on. This must be distinguished from the truth of everyday transactions as it is seen by deluded beings afflicted with *avidyā*, even if *pramāṇa* is involved and even though there is *prima facie* agreement between the two.

The English term 'relative' does not unfortunately convey all the connotations of the Sanskrit and Tibetan words. Candrakīrti (*Prasannapadā* 493) suggests three possible meanings of the Sanskrit: (i) complete covering or the 'screen' of ignorance which hides truth (this is the meaning taken over in the Tibetan term); (ii) existence or origination through dependence; (iii) worldly behaviour or speech behaviour involving designation and designatum. All three reflect different aspects of *saṃvṛti*. See Matilal (1973:57).
There are many studies in the research literature on the Two Truths. For detailed analysis see for example: Lindtner (1981); Sprung (1973); Newland (1992 and 1999); Cabezón (1992); Murti (1960:228-255).
[6]Sopa and Hopkins (1989:282).

prayoga is that the logical subject is accepted by both sides of the debate, and not merely by the opponent.[7] This implies that the Svātantrika expresses his/her own point of view as well as the opponent's; and, of course, this itself entails that the Svātantrika has a point of view to express. This can be problematic on account of the principle upheld by Nāgārjuna that no authentic Mādhyamika can or should properly hold a truly existent view (*dṛṣṭi*).[8] This is why Prāsaṅgikas prefer *prasaṅga* arguments.

There are two factors that determine the type of argument used in the MAL: the incidence of the phrase *yang dag tu* (meaning 'in ultimate reality') in the second line of the verse; and the issue of whether or not the opponent himself holds that the truly existent entity that he posits within his system is unitary. The former is held to be a defining characteristic of Svātantrika-Madhyamaka.

> *[Svātantrikas] accept a qualifier* (khyad par; viśeṣaṇa) *to the negative or affirmative assertions* (dam bca'; pratijñā) *[they make] by means of the three independent reasons* (rtags; hetu), *of the three arguments* (tshad ma; pramāṇa) *and of the two consequences* (thal ba; prasaṅga).[9]

The example of a Svātantrika qualifier given in the *bLo gsal grub mtha'* is "in ultimate truth (*don dam par; paramārthatas*)", and this is indeed the sense of the qualifier we find in verse 1 of the MAL. In this respect, then, the 'neither one nor many' argument is used in accordance with Svātantrika practice. Treated as a syllogism the argument can be analysed as follows:

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[7]Ngag dbang dpal ldan's *Annotations (mChan 'grel)* on 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's *Grub mtha' chen mo*. dbu 27b.5-28a.1. Cited by Lopez (1987:75).

[8]MMK XXVII.30. "I bow to Gautama, who through compassion taught the true doctrine which leads to the relinquishing of all views." sarvadṛṣṭiprahāṇāya yaḥ saddharmamadeśayat/ anukampāmupādāya taṃ namasyāmi gautamaṃ//

[9]*bLo gsal grub mtha'*, XII-9. In Mimaki (1982:174-5). rang rgyud rtags gsum tshad ma gnyis// thal ba gnyis kyis dgag sgrub kyi// dam bca' la ni khyad par bzhed//

subject *(dharmin; chos can)*	dngos 'di dag
predicate *(sādhyadharma; bsgrub bya'i chos)*	yang dag tu rang bzhin med[10]
reason *(liṅga; rtags)*	gcig pa dang du ma'i rang bzhin bral ba'i phyir
example *(dṛṣṭānta; dpe)*	gzugs brnyan bzhin

The second issue is whether or not the opponent considers that the logical subject is unitary.[11] Kamalaśīla[12], lCang skya[13] and Mi pham[14] all agree that if opponents do not assert this explicitly, they do so by implication. They therefore conclude it is acceptable to consider the 'neither one nor many' argument in the MAL as an instance of *prasaṅga*. Both lCang skya[15] and Mi pham[16] find the best solution to this whole logical dilemma is to say that the argument in the MAL can be understood either as a *svatantra prayoga* or as a *prasaṅga*. This means that in terms of its use of logic, the MAL does not fit neatly into either the Svātantrika or the Prāsaṅgika school. Consequently, if the logical grounds for Śāntarakṣita's status as a Svātantrika are inconclusive, his position with regard to the philosophical viewpoints ascribed to Svātantrikas on the basis of their use of syllogism

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[10]It is not clear grammatically whether *yang dag tu* qualifies the predicate or the reason or both. From the point of view of its meaning, I would argue that it must qualify both since if things do not inherently and ultimately exist it is because they are found not to be units ultimately and not to have ultimately existing parts.

[11]This question raises the technical problem known as *āśrayāsiddha* ('unestablished basis'), where an argument is judged invalid on the grounds that its subject (*dharmin; chos can*) is non-existent because it is asserted neither by the Mādhyamika nor by his opponent. The issue is addressed by Nāgārjuna in his *Vigrahavyāvartanī* XII-XIII (in Johnston and Kunst, p.13). See Tillemans (1984); also 'What can one Reasonably Say about Nonexistence?' by Tom Tillemans and Donald S. Lopez, in *Scripture, Logic and Language* by Tom Tillemans, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1999, pp.247-284.

[12]In Lopez (1987:360). "These things asserted by ourselves and others..." in Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* may be taken either as a statement of refutation—a consequence *(prasaṅga, thal 'gyur)*—or as a statement of proof—a syllogism *(prayoga, sbyor ba)*." *Madhyamakāloka*.

[13]The Svātantrika chapter of lCang skya's *Presentation of Tenets*, in Lopez (1987:360-1).

[14]C p.129.

[15] See Lopez (1987:360).

[16]C p.129.rgya bod kyi mkhas pa la las gzhan stes brtags pa ma grags pa la thal bar sgrub pa dang/ grags pa'i ngo bo rnams la gnyis ka ltar yang rung gsungs kyang/ dbu ma snang ba sogs las ba shad pa ltar khyad phye mi dgos par thal rang gang ltar bkod kyang rung ngo// "[Some] scholars of India and Tibet have explained that the less important imputations of other schools [can be] established by means of consequences *(thal bar)*, and that both arguments are appropriate for [establishing] the most important entities. Yet, as it is taught in the *Madhyamakāloka* and other [texts], no such distinction is necessary and both consequences *(thal)* and autonomous syllogisms *(rang)* are appropriate." Mi pham has argued that the first verse of the MAL is valid either as a *prasaṅga* or as a syllogism, but adds that both types of argument are suitable for the purposes of refuting the entities selected in the MAL. One can therefore take them as either with no hidden soteriological implications.

becomes equally inconclusive. So any determining evidence for his philosophical views will have to be sought elsewhere.

It can be argued that this very inconclusiveness militates in favour of a definition of Svātantrika which does not insist that the use of a logical method necessarily entails a particular soteriology and metaphysics. Given that Śāntarakṣita must hold a particular philosophical view, and given the uncertain interpretation of the form of logic he employed, it follows that *svatantra prayoga* and *prasaṅga* cannot in themselves necessarily entail mutually exclusive viewpoints. If we recall that at the time of writing Śāntarakṣita was unaware of any Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika distinction, the question about logical forms and their implications would not have occurred to him. This might help to corroborate Mi pham's understanding of Svātantrika-Madhyamaka outlined in Chapter I, that its main characteristic is not its logic but its metaphysics and soteriology, without any necessary relation between the two.

V.3 Situating the use of this argument in the MAL

V.3.1 The *locus classicus* of the 'neither one nor many argument'

It has been said that the 'neither one nor many' argument finds its *locus classicus* in Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālaṃkāra.*[17] It is one of several forms of reasoning used by Mādhyamikas to establish emptiness *(śūnyatā)*, that is, the non-inherent existence of persons *(pudgalanairātmya)* and the non-inherent existence of other phenomena *(dharmanairātmya)*. In general, there are six main types of reasoning which are:[18] the diamond slivers or splinters *(rdo rje gzegs ma'i gtan tshigs; vajrakaṇahetu)*, the refutation of production according to the extremes of existence and non-existence *(yod med skye 'gog gi*

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[17]Tillemans (1982:103).

[18]See Tillemans (1984:361); Hopkins (1983:131-196). The Tibetan commentarial literature has several different ways of classifying these reasonings, so their number varies according to the author from five (Sera Chos kyi rgyal mtshan) to six (lCang skya and 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa).

gtan tshigs; sadasadutpādapratiṣedhahetu), the refutation of production of the four alternatives *(mu bzhi skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs; catuṣkotyutpādapratiṣedhahetu)*, the fivefold *(rnam lnga'i rigs pa)* and sevenfold *(rnam bdun gyi rigs pa)* reasonings, and the reasoning based on dependent arising *(rten 'brel gyi gtan tshigs; pratītyasamutpādahetu).*[19] As for the 'neither one nor many' argument itself, this is categorized by 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa and lCang skya under 'the refutation of production of the four alternatives',[20] whereas Sera Chos kyi rgyal mtshan reserves that category for Jñānagarbha's version of the argument, and lists Śāntarakṣita's use of it as a separate category. The difference between them he identifies as being that Śāntarakṣita analyses the nature of phenomena whereas Jñānagarbha analyses cause and effect.

In so far as *śūnyatā* is co-terminous with dependent arising *(pratītyasamutpāda),*[21] it is logical that these should be the two main and equally important approaches to establishing *śūnyatā* through reasoning. Non-inherent existence and conditioned existence are two sides of the same coin.[22] This view of *śūnyatā* follows the MMK where Nāgārjuna's chief refutation of inherent existence is his refutation of causation in Chapter I and his assertion in Chapter XXIV, 18: "We explain dependent arising as emptiness."[23]

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[19]The terms for these reasonings appeared in Indian sources, in particular in Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka* and in Atiśa's *Bodhimārgapradīpapañjikā*. See Tillemans (1984:371-2, n.16) for detailed references. Neither text is extant in the original Sanskrit, so this observation is based on the Tibetan translations of these Sanskrit texts.

[20]The main Indian source for this refutation is verse 14 of Jñānagarbha's SDV, cited below. See Hopkins (1983:154-160).

[21]lCang skya asserts that this is the view held by Svātantrikas. "Even those Mādhyamikas [the Svātantrikas] who assert existence by way of its own character *(svalakṣaṇa; rang mtshan)* conventionally do not in any way assert that phenomena are truly established. Therefore, they explain the synonymity of dependent arising and emptiness that was explained above [in the citation of MMK XXIV, 18-19]." Translation in Lopez (1987:278).

[22]"According to Madhyamaka, emptiness is identical in principle with causal relativity *(pratītyasamutpāda)* because a thing that exists inherently cannot be subject to change or have any causal relationship with other things. Conversely, whatever exists dependently is empty, and vice versa." Pettit (1999:51). See also Hopkins (1983:220).

[23]yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatāṃ tāṃ pracakṣmahe/

V.3.2 The precedents for this argument

Although the first verse of the MAL is cited as a classic example of the 'neither one nor many' argument, it had actually been formulated well before Śāntarakṣita's time. In fact, we find a blueprint for Śāntarakṣita's entire MAL project as early as the third century C.E. in verse 344 of Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka*:

> *When different things are examined*
> *None of them are unitary.*
> *Because they are not unitary*
> *Things are not multiple either.*[24]

It is probably on account of the fact that Āryadeva does not fully develop or apply this verse as an argument that Eckel (1992:22) cites the first known instance of the *ekānekaviyogahetu* as that found in the *Tattvāvatāra*, where Śrīgupta writes:

> *In reality everything, both inside and out, is empty, because it is neither unitary nor multiple, like a reflection.*[25]

Śrīgupta's disciple, Jñānagarbha, may well have been inspired by this[26] when he wrote verse 14 of his *Satyadvayavibhaṅgakārikā*:

> *Multiple entities do not produce unitary [entities],*
> *multiple [entities] do not produce [other] multiple [entities],*
> *unitary [entities] do not produce multiple entities,*
> *and unitary [entities] do not produce [other] unitary [entities].*[27]

As Śāntarakṣita was a disciple of Jñānagarbha, his decision to use the *ekānekaviyogahetu* as his chief argument in the MAL can be seen as a development within this master-disciple 'lineage'. And this 'lineage' of influence continued after Śāntarakṣita in the works of his own disciples, namely in Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka* and Haribhadra's *Abhi-*

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[24]dngos po gang gang yongs btags pa// de dang de la gcig nyid med// gang gis gcig kyang yod min pa// des na du ma dag kyang med// www.asianclassics.org/texts/tengyur/TD3846M.ACT; 16a.
[25]Derge Tripitaka Ha 39b (Tohoku 3892). P. (101) 5292 Sa, 44b2-49a5. phyi rol nang na gnas 'di kun// yang dag tu ni rang bzhin med// gcig dang du ma'i rang bzhin nyid// bral ba'i phyir na gzugs brnyan bzhin// Ejima (1980) points out that the MAL closely resembles the 22 *kārikā*-s of Śrīgupta's *Tattvāvatāravṛtti*.
[26]Eckel (1992:22).
[27]Tibetan text in Eckel (1987:165). du mas dngos po gcig mi byed// du mas du ma byed ma yin// gcig gis du ma'i dngos mi byed// gcig gis gcig byed pa yang min//

samayālaṃkārānāma prajñapāramitopadeśaśāstravṛtti.[28] However, not all these scholars use the argument in the same way, and there is a case for following Sera Chos kyi rgyal mtshan and making a distinction between its application to causal relations (Jñānagarbha and Haribhadra) and its application to the nature of things (Śrīgupta and Śāntarakṣita). In this case, the first verse of the MAL would be the *locus classicus* of just one type of *ekānekaviyogahetu.*

In addition, it is important to note that despite what might be inferred from commentators like Kamalaśīla (see above in Chapter I), the *ekānekaviyogahetu* is not the only form of argument used in the MAL. In the third section of the main text (verses 67-90) where the author counters possible objections to his presentation of the Two Truths, he employs other Madhyamaka arguments, notably various instances of syllogism which do not rely on the 'neither one nor many' framework.[29] He also uses *prasaṅga (thal 'gyur)* arguments in support of the 'neither one nor many' argument in his opening sections.[30] So although the *ekānekaviyogahetu* is Śāntarakṣita's chief argument, a broad range of logical methods is in fact deployed in the MAL as a whole. In addition to these, Śāntarakṣita supports his view with direct and indirect allusions to scriptural and commentarial sources which can be traced throughout the MAL.[31]

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[28]Spuṭārthā 94a: chos kyi rjes su 'brang ba rnams kyang gcig dang du ma'i ngo bo nyid dang bral ba'i phyir zhes bya ba la sogs pa'i tshad mas gzhi dang lam dang rnam pa skye ba med pa yongs su shes pa.../Those who follow the Dharma, however, understand that the bases, paths and aspects do not [actually] arise. They understand by means of various *pramāṇa*-s that they have neither the nature of oneness nor that of multiplicity.

[29]Verses 81 and 90. For example, verse 81 reads: rim gyis 'byung phyir blo bur min// rtag 'byung ma yin rta gma yin// de bas goms 'dra de nyid phyir// dang po rang gi rigs las skyes//
"Because they occur serially, [ideas] do not arise without cause, or from an eternal [cause], nor are they themselves eternal. Therefore: [logical subject] the first [moment of mind] arises from [a preceding moment] of its own kind, [reason] because [ideas/appearances arise] [example] in the manner of being habituated to something."

[30]Verses 12, 29, 35, 39, 49, 50, 58. For instance, verse 50 reads: gal te sna tshogs de gcig na// nam mkha'i gos can lugs sam ci// sna tshogs gcig pa'i rang bzhin min// rin chen sna tshogs la sogs 'dra// "If [you consider] a multiple [entity] to be unitary, is your theory any different from that of the Jainas? Multiplicity can not have an intrinsic unitary nature, in the same way as various jewels [cannot be a single jewel], and so forth."

[31]For details see Chapter III.5 above.

V.4 The thematic structure of the MAL

How does Śāntarakṣita's application of this argument relate to the structure of the MAL as a whole? According to Mi pham, the first part of the MAL sets out to identify and distinguish the Two Truths, firstly ultimate truth *(paramārthasatya; don dam bden pa;* verses 1-62) and then relative truth *(saṃvṛtisatya; kun rdzob bden pa;* verses 63-66). Beginning with ultimate truth, verse 1 presents a general statement of the argument refuting true existence, and this is subsequently applied to a broad spectrum of phenomena purported to have true existence. Specifically the targets of refutation are unconditioned entities:[32] the *pudgala*, the pervasive *(khyab pa)*, the non-pervasive, the coarse (particles), the subtle (instants of consciousness), aspects[33] in perception, and the self-illuminating consciousness that is the subject of cognition. Each of these entities is postulated by a specific school and the range of views being refuted has been identified in the various structural outlines (Table 1).

Having applied the general argument to each one of these entities in turn, and refuted true existence in each one of these non-Buddhist and Buddhist schools with respect to the unitary nature of entities, the corollary—refuting the true existence of entities with a multiple nature—is treated briefly in verses 61 and 62 without any need to apply it to examples.

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[32]The term *'dus ma byas* (Sanskrit *asaṃskṛta*) is usually translated by contemporary Tibetans as 'uncompounded', despite the fact that the common translation of the Sanskrit in the Abhidharma context is 'unconditioned'. Tibetans argue that they dislike 'unconditioned' because they consider the word to mean both 'uncaused' and 'unconditioned', and hesitate to give preference to the importance of conditions over that of causes. In Abhidharma, all *dharma*-s are considered simples and hence uncompounded, in the sense of not being constituted of parts, whereas some *dharma*-s are conditioned and others are unconditioned. However, from the Madhyamaka perspective nothing is uncompounded—everything is imputed to a combination of parts. While we have retained the translation 'unconditioned' throughout this study, the intricacies of these meanings should be borne in mind and applied to each context.

[33]We translate *ākāra* (*rnam pa*) as 'aspects' even though this English word does not convey a very clear idea of what *rnam pa* means. Its advantage is that it does not have the philosophical connotations of a word like 'image', nor its exclusively visual reference. Compare, for instance, the discussion of images and appearances in *Perceiving:A Philosophical Study* by R. M. Chisholm, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1957, p.43ff.

'Aspect' is understood to refer to 'that which appears to perception', whether that be caused by an external object or by an internal karmic latency. All the examples and images used in the Buddhist literature are based on visual perception, even though *rnam pa* is understood to apply to the perception of all six senses.

This is because it is a straightforward logical inference, since oneness and manyness are posited as mutually exclusive *(phan tshun spangs te gnas)* with no other alternative *(phung po gzhan)*.[34] This first section deals with the ultimate truth of things *(paramārtha-satya; don dam bden pa)*; stated another way, the 'neither one nor many' argument is a means of examining only the ultimate nature of entities *(paramārthasiddhi; don dam par grub pa)* not their relative existence *(saṃvṛtisat; kun rdzob tu yod pa)*. In the second part of the text (verses 63-66) Śāntarakṣita presents his view of relative truth. He then defends his view of the Two Truths in verses 67-90, and ends (verses 91-97) by praising the virtues of this approach. The detailed presentation of this analysis can be found in Mi pham's *sa bcad* in Appendix I.

V.5 The soteriological structure of the MAL

This thematic structure is not only of philosophical interest; it also has soteriological significance. Indeed, most of the comments Mi pham makes on the first verse of the MAL concern Śāntarakṣita's soteriology, inviting us to consider the significance of the way in which the 'neither one nor many' argument is applied by Śāntarakṣita. Verse 92 presents the most fundamental order which underpins the entire treatise:

> **Based on Mind Only one must know that external entities do not [truly] exist.**
> **Based on this standpoint [of Madhyamaka], one must know that there is no self at all even in that [which is Mind Only].**
> sems tsam la ni brten nas su// phyi rol dngos med shes par bya//
> tshul 'dir brten nas de la yang// shin tu bdag med shes par bya//

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[34] Śāntarakṣita states in MAL 62: There is no entity that is classified as other than unitary or multiple, since these are mutually exclusive. gcig dang du ma ma gtogs par// rnam pa gzhan dang ldan pa yi// dngos po mi rung 'di gnyis ni// phan tshun spangs te gnas phyir ro// And Kamalaśīla also writes in MALP 66b : As for oneness and manyness, they are characterized as being mutually exclusive, and therefore free of any other alternative. gcig pu'i bdag nyid dang du ma'i bdag nyid ni phan tsun spangs te gnas pa'i mtshan nyid yin pas phung po gzhan sel to/

In Tibetan textbooks on logic, two things are defined as contradictory if they are observed to be different and if there is nothing which is both of them. There are two types of contradictories *(virodha; 'gal ba)*: 1) mutual contradiction and 2) not abiding together in the sense of exclusion and inclusion. Mutual contradiction is divided into two: direct contradictories, or dichotomies, and indirect contradictories. Dichotomies can be either explicitly or implicitly discordant. The 'neither one nor many argument' is an explicit dichotomy. See Lopez (1987:186).

TABLE 1

The Views refuted by Śāntarakṣita in the MAL according to Mi pham

The numbers refer to verse numbers

	THE TRUE EXISTENCE OF				
SCHOOLS	**UNCONDITIONED ENTITIES**	**PERSONS**	**GROSS PHENOMENA**	**SENSE ORGANS**	**MENTAL FACTORS IN COGNITION**
Vaibhāṣika	3-8		10-13	14-15	16-21
Pudgalavāda		9			
Sautrāntika					
Non-pluralists					22-23
Half-eggists					24-30
Equalists					31-34
Cittamātra					
Satyākāravāda					
Half-eggists					46-48
Equalists					49
Non-pluralists					50-51
Alīkākāravāda					52-60
Vaiśeṣika	2			14-15	35
Jaina					36, 50-51
Mīmāṁsā					36
Lokāyata					37
Sāṃkhya				14-15	38-39
Vedānta					40

In his autocommentary on this verse, Śāntarakṣita explains in more detail what is refuted from the standpoint of Mind Only.

> *By relying on Mind Only, things that are asserted to be external to the mind or manifestations of the mind, such as I and mine, subject and object, and so forth, are effortlessly realized to be without a nature.*[35]

lCang skya[36] interprets the above passage as indicating that for Śāntarakṣita there are two

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[35]sems tsam gyi tshul la brten nas/ mtshungs par ldan pa dang bcas pa'i sems las phyi rol du 'dod pa bdag dang bdag gi dang/ gzung ba dang 'dzin pa la sogs pa rang bzhin med par tshegs med pa kho nar rtogs so// Ichigō (1985:294). MALV P. 79a.

[36]See the Svātantrika chapter in lCang skya's *Presentation of Tenets* (translated in Lopez, 1987:345-8).

steps to be taken. First, one ascertains the selflessness of persons, and then one ascertains the suchness which is the emptiness of the duality of subject and object. In the next passage of the autocommentary, Śāntarakṣita identifies a third and final step when one ascertains the emptiness of the mind itself.

> *Regarding this approach, although one has realized that the mind is without a nature because it is not self-arisen, in order to realize the Middle Way which is an abandonment of all extremes, one thoroughly realizes that [the mind] has no [true] nature since it has neither a unitary nor a multiple nature.*[37]

So lCang skya summarises Śāntarakṣita's approach as a three-step process for ascertaining *śūnyatā*: 1) ascertaining the selflessness of persons; 2) ascertaining the lack of duality of subject and object; and 3) ascertaining the non-true existence of the mind.

By relating this strategy back to the thematic structure of the MAL we can identify the salient principles as follows. First comes the refutation of the true existence of unconditioned entities that are fabrications without a perceptual basis, for example a Creator-God and meditational states of cessation. The next broad category includes entities the existence of which is imputed to a perceptual basis such as persons, gross phenomena and the sense organs. And finally comes the refutation of the true existence of the mind which falls into two parts. Initially, the refutation concerns the consciousness which is the subject of cognition, thus completing the refutation of both cognized object and cognizing subject, in other words the refutation of the duality of object and subject whether the object is considered external to the mind or mental in nature. Subsequently, the argument is applied to the non-intentional consciousness, that is, to that consciousness that has no object of apprehension and the arising of which does not depend either on itself or on any object of knowledge. The example here is the subtle mental continuum in Cittamātra, the

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[37]tshul 'di ni rang byung ba med pas sems de rang bzhin med par rtogs su zin kyang/ mtha' thams cad spangs pa dbu ma'i lam 'di rtogs na/ gcig dang du ma'i rang bzhin dang bral bas rang bzin med par shin tu rtogs so// Ichigō (1985:294). MALV P. 79a.

self-illuminating mind. So let us summarise the order in which topics are refuted.

1) unconditioned entities asserted by non-Buddhists
2) unconditioned entities asserted by Buddhists
3) persons
4) gross phenomena
5) the sense organs
6) consciousness.

To this, we must now add the order in which different philosophical standpoints are presented. Kajiyama (1978:114-143) has identifed five stages in the epistemological progression.

(1) The Sarvāstivāda stage in which external realities are recognized as much as mental ones;

(2) the Sautrāntika stage in which mental aspects are regarded as objects of cognition and the external world is reduced to the imperceptible cause of cognition;

(3) the Satyākāravāda-yogācāra stage which replaces the external world with mental aspects, and asserts that aspects are as real as the illumination of mind;

(4) the Alīkākāravāda-yogācāra stage, which admits the exclusive reality of the illumination of mind; and

(5) the Mādhyamika view which denies even the true existence of the illumination of mind.

While the MAL itself and its autocommentary are concerned with philosophical viewpoints rather than religious practice, Kajiyama shows how the soteriological progression presented by Kamalaśīla in his first *Bhāvanākrama* corresponds exactly to the epistemological stages of the MAL, implying that both disciple and master shared the same viewpoint. This correspondence permits an interpretation of the MAL in terms of successive stages of realization, in addition to its obvious logical progression. One of the relevant passages from the *Bhāvanākrama* is as follows.

Having ascended [the truth of] mind-[with aspects] only, the yogin should not

> *imagine external objects [to be existent]; abiding in the meditation having as its object suchness [or illumination marked by the absence of cognizer and cognitum parts], he ought to go beyond mind-[with aspects] only. Having thus gone beyond even mind-[with aspects] only, he should go also beyond [the illumination] without the manifestation [of the two parts]; abiding thus in the non-manifestation [of the illumination without the two parts], the yogin intuits [the truth of] the Great Vehicle.*[38]

Kamalaśīla explains these various viewpoints as different stages of meditation. Abandoning the apprehension of objects as external, the meditator focuses on mental aspects; and once he realizes the emptiness of those aspects, he abandons them and realizes a mental state without aspects. Finally, he comes to realize that even that mind which is devoid of aspects and any intentional object whatsoever is also empty of inherent existence (Table 2). In Table 2, the hierarchy of doctrines is based on the fact that one has to realize the emptiness of one school's truly existent entity in order to progress to the next viewpoint, or to the next stage of meditation. Before we examine the philosophical and soteriological implications involved here, we must first clarify what is meant by 'true existence'.

V.6 The meaning of 'true existence'

Looking at the text another way, we could say that there is only one object of refutation in the MAL (and indeed in Madhyamaka generally) and that is 'true existence' *(satyasat; bden par yod pa* or *bden grub)*. Śāntarakṣita deploys the 'neither one nor many' argument to show that no type of entity whatsoever has true existence. The reason he sets out to do this is entirely soteriological: Svātantrikas assert[39] that the concept of true or ultimate existence (*bden 'dzin*) is the final root that binds beings to cyclic existence *(saṃsāra)*; that all phenomena lack true existence is what must be realized in order to attain buddhahood. Although Mādhyamikas assert that true existence itself does not, nor ever will exist, the

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[38]*Bhāvanākrama* I, v.256-7. Translation by Kajiyama (1978).
[39]Lopez (1987:134).

TABLE 2

Epistemological and soteriological structure of the MAL

Buddhist school	*Held as truly existing philosophically and in meditation experience*	*Verse number*
SARVĀSTIVĀDA	External phenomena	3-8
SAUTRĀNTIKA	Mental images produced by external phenomena	22-34
SATYĀKĀRAVĀDA -YOGĀCĀRA	Mental images produced by internal factors	46-51
ALIKĀKĀRAVĀDA -YOGĀCĀRA	Self-illuminating mind	52-60
MADHYAMAKA	No entity at all held to be truly existent	61-62

concept of it certainly does and it is this concept that must be identified and eliminated.

There are two methods for doing this, meditation and analysis, which work hand in hand.[40] Both begin by identifying a referent object[41] and proceed to show lack of true existence in relation to it. This procedure explains the thematic structure of the MAL.

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[40]Hopkins (1983:9-10).

[41]*Bodhicaryāvatara,* IX.139. "When there is no perception of something falsely projected as existent, there is no understanding of the non-existence of that entity. For it follows that, if an entity is not real, the negation of it is clearly not real." Translated by Crosby and Skilton (1995:129). In other words, it only makes sense to refute the true existence of an entity that is thought to truly exist and that is taken as real. According to this view, refuting the general idea of true existence without relating it to any of its purported instances will have no soteriological effect.

So what does 'true existence' *(satyasat; bden par yod pa)* mean? When it is used in Madhyamaka it denotes the idea that the existence of an entity is independent of the existence of anything else, including the perceiver; that it is eternal; that it is unchanging; and that it exists substantially. The meaning of 'true existence' evolved with the development of Buddhist thought. Williams (1989:60-63) has pointed out that there was a shift in its meaning between Vaibhāṣika and Theravāda Abhidharma on the one hand, and Mahāyāna works derived from the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature on the other. In his paper entitled 'On the Abhidharma Ontology' (Williams, 1981) he shows that Sarvāstivādins take true existence, self-existence *(svabhāva)* or essence to denote the defining characteristic of a *dharma. Dharma*-s are primary existents, and *svabhāva* is an atemporal determinant of primary existence which impermanent *dharma*-s instantiate, it is that which distinguishes one thing from another. The etymological meaning of *dharma* is 'that which holds or bears' (it is a gerundive of the verb *dharati,* to bear) its *svabhāva.*[42] Secondary existents, by contrast, are composed of parts and have no *svabhāva.* For Saṃghabhadra the distinction between primary and secondary existents corresponds to that between ultimate and relative truth (*paramārtha* and *saṃvṛtisatya*).[43] But the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* taught that even *dharma*-s are mental constructions; they are not unitary, and they have no *svabhāva.* The term *svabhāva* is nonetheless used in Madhyamaka, where it comes to denote independent real existence and its cognates. Although in Madhyamaka nothing has *svabhāva,* the term nonetheless is used to refer to those philosophical systems that do assert *svabhāva,* and to the *svabhāva* mistakenly imputed to entities through the ignorance of saṃsāric beings.

dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgikas analyse true existence further, asserting that it also denotes that

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[42]Ñāṅamoli includes a detailed review of the numerous meanings of *dhamma* in his notes to the *Visuddhimagga,* VII.n1, pp.769-770.
[43]Translated by Louis de la Vallée Poussin in 'Documents d'Abhidharma: La Controverse du Temps', *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques* 5, 1937, pp.25-128.

things are inherently existent (*rang bzhin gyis grub pa*); that they exist 'from their own side' (*rang ngos nas grub pa*) meaning that their existence does not depend on anyone apprehending it; and that their existence is established by way of their having an own character *(rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa).*[44] However, dGe lugs pas also hold that these three last definitions are not recognized by Svātantrikas who, they claim, accept these types of existence conventionally. This debate will be considered in Chapter IX.

True existence in Madhyamaka is distinguished from relative existence *(saṃvṛtisat; kun rdzob tu yod pa)*, conditioned existence *(pratītyasamutpāda; rten 'byung)*, and imputed existence *(prajñaptisat; btags yod)*. Another way of explaining true existence is to say that the term refers to the being of an entity; not to a kind of being but to being in its absoluteness, conceived as a fundamental ontological dimension sensed as 'reality'. A true existent is a real. When entities are said to have a 'self' in expressions like 'the self of phenomena' *(dharmātman; chos kyi bdag)* and 'the self of persons' *(pudgalātman; gang zag gi bdag)*, 'self' refers to the true existence attributed to that entity, which can be understood as its essence. Mādhyamikas, of course, specialise in refuting the two selves and showing the selflessness of phenomena *(dharmanairātmya; chos kyi bdag med)* and the selflessness of persons *(pudgalanairātmya; gang zag gi bdag med).* This is simply a way of talking about the idea that neither phenomena nor persons truly exist. Yet another way of putting the same idea is to say that phenomena and persons are empty *(śūnya; stong pa)* meaning empty of true existence, and for Mādhyamikas it is emptiness *(śūnyatā; stong pa nyid)* of true existence that is the ultimate truth.

This notion of true existence has both ontological and epistemological facets. Ontologically, true existence denotes being in the sense that a thing not only exists as it appears,

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[44]See Hopkins (9-12; 36); Williams (1989:60-63); Murti (1955:86).

but it exists as an unchanging, independent essence. Explanations of how essence relates to existence will vary from one opponent's system to another. The epistemological interest lies in the issue of how the ontological dimension of true existence is known. To elucidate this, scholars of Madhyamaka[45] distinguish between innate and acquired conceptions of inherent existence. Someone may acquire the concept through studying various philosophical systems, for example, and such a conception is termed artificial *(parikalpita; kun btags)*. It is relatively easy to refute artificial conceptions of inherent existence because one can simply point out discrepancies or contradictions inherent in any given philosophical system. However, the innate conception of true existence is more subtle, and far more difficult to eliminate. We saw above that for Svātantrikas the concept of true existence is the final root that binds beings to *saṃsāra*. Here, true existence is a concept that arises due to innate ignorance *(ma rig pa lhan skyes)* and for Yogācāra-Svātantrikas[46] this, together with its seeds, is a subtle obstruction to omniscience (*shes bya'i sgrib pa*). The Buddhist claim here is that all beings in *saṃsāra*, human and otherwise, perceive things as having inherent existence. As a result they grasp on to things as real and permanent, and crave permanent satisfaction from them. They suffer because they do not perceive things the way they are and this misunderstanding *(ma rig pa)* imprisons them in cyclic existence. 'True existence' does not exist in truth, it is erroneously attributed to appearances, and the concept reflects the mentality of beings in *saṃsāra* rather than the nature of reality as such. But proponents of true existence mistakenly take it as a truth that pertains to the object just as it is.

Finally, one might wonder what true existence means in Yogācāra-Svātantrika. What precisely does Śāntarakṣita consider he is refuting? This was a matter of controversy between

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[45]Williams (1989:61).
[46]Lopez (1987:116).

Tibetan scholars. According to dGe lugs pa doxographers, Svātantrikas and Prāsaṅgikas are distinguished by their differing understandings of relative existence, and since true existence is defined in relation to relative existence, when each school comes to refute true existence they are not refuting exactly the same idea. Amongst the nexus of ideas associated with true existence, Prāsaṅgikas include the idea that entities exist by way of their own character *(svalakṣaṇa; rang mtshan)* conventionally,[47] but on the dGe lugs pa view Svātantrikas do not refute this. On the other hand, Sa skya[48] scholars do not all agree that Svātantrikas accept existence by way of its own character conventionally, and dispute the evidence put forward by Tsong kha pa which, incidentally, is based on his reading of Bhāvaviveka. As we will see in more detail in Chapter IX, Mi pham does admit that Śāntarakṣita accepts the own character of things but only conventionally, without ultimate entailment.

Secondly, we cannot ignore that Śāntarakṣita's position was strongly influenced by Yogācāra. This warrants separate consideration since the Yogācāra school has its own unique definition of emptiness *(śūnyatā)* and hence of true existence. Sthiramati, for instance, defines *śūnyatā* as that which is free from subject and object *(grāhyagrāhakasvarūparahita)*, and that which is beyond dualism *(advayā)*.[49] It follows that true existence is conceived by a dualistic mind which apprehends the world in terms of subject and object. That is to say, true existence is only conceived by intentional consciousnesses. The soteriological goal here is therefore to attain non-dual apprehension or understanding, however that is defined. In his *vṛtti* on the first verse Śāntarakṣita, it will be recalled, explicitly mentioned the refutation of subject and object as an element in the soteriological process towards buddhahood, so it is reasonable to associate this with his Yogācāra

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[47]Lopez (1987:68).
[48]bsTan dar lha ram pa, *gCig du bral gyi rnam gzhag legs bshad rgya mtsho las btus pa'i 'khrul spong bdud rtsi'i gzegs ma,* 428.3-4, cited by Lopez (1987:68).
[49]*Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā*, in Friedmann (1937:10-11).

affiliations. It fits with the soteriological structure presented above, which concludes with non-intentional awareness. However, if Śāntarakṣita considers it is necessary to point out in verse 92 that even objectless awareness[50] is empty too, this implies that once subject-object dualism has been overcome there still remains a subtle sense of true existence experienced by objectless awareness itself.[51] By identifying this subtlest of all concepts of true existence and showing it, too, to be empty, Madhyamaka takes its refutation of true existence further than Yogācāra.

V.7 The logical subject of the argument

Mi pham's first points on verse 1 come under the subheading of 'the logical subject' *(dharmin; chos can).* The logical subject is stated in the first line of the verse: "those entities [postulated by] ourselves and others". Rather than engage in logical considerations on this point, as one might have expected, Mi pham identifies the interest here in terms of whether or not Śāntarakṣita's use of the *ekānekaviyogahetu* is soteriologically effective. He does not allude to the discussions on this topic that had taken place in India or Tibet, but the argument he presents can be taken as his implicit response to those discussions. lCang skya, for instance, had asked himself the same question with respect to the MAL.

> *These [reasonings] are the ways to refute the object of negation imputed by our own and other schools, but in order also to refute the object of the innate conception of true existence, one must know well how damage is done by these reasonings.*[52]

The context of this question is that the ultimate purpose of all Mādhyamika refutations of truly existing entities is to free deluded beings from the obscurations that bind them to *saṃsāra.* Accordingly, Śāntarakṣita introduces his soteriological goal in the *vṛtti*:

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[50]According to dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgikas, following Dharmakīrti, objectless awareness is impossible. The term is used here to denote the self-illuminating mental continuum asserted by Cittamātra. The issue is discussed in detail in Chapter VIII.

[51]See citation from Kamalaśīla in section V.5 above, note 38.

[52]From the Svātantrika chapter of his *Presentation of Tenets.* Translation by Lopez (1987:370).

> *If someone who sets out independently to establish the welfare of self and others, understands that everything that is enjoyed merely through a lack of examination of particular existents does not truly exist ultimately, like a reflection in a mirror and so on, then his various emotional and intellectual obscurations will be eliminated.*[53]

We saw above that Śāntarakṣita is not concerned with soteriological matters in detail in the MAL, but the overarching purpose of the work is explicitly soteriological. So the question is: since bringing about total liberation from *saṃsāra* is the stated goal of this text, does the argument work? The reason this question is so important is because it lies at the heart of three issues on which Prāsaṇgikas and Svātantrikas are said to be divided. Lopez explains:

> *[There is] disagreement between the Svātantrikas and Prāsaṅgikas on three fundamental issues: the meaning of self and selflessness, the nature of the two obstructions, and the distinguishing feature of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna.*[54]

Now, in order to clarify the various definitions and arguments on both sides, and apply these to Śāntarakṣita's work, it is crucial to remember that the Svātantrika-Prāsaṇgika distinction was made retrospectively by Tibetans. Indian Mādhyamikas were themselves unaware of it. The arguments, then, are a matter of interpretation from hindsight, and not a matter of relating a definitive and uncontested set of criteria to a particular text. In particular, the rNying ma understanding of the Svātantrika-Prāsaṇgika distinction is not the same as that of the dGe lugs pa school, and this accounts for some of the disagreements we will note between Mi pham's interpretation of the MAL and that of certain dGe lug pa doxographers.[55]

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[53]MALV P.52b3ff; Ichigō (1985:14). bdag dang gzhan gyi don phun sum tshogs pa bsgrub par ci la 'ang ma rag par chas pa/ dngos po'i rnam pa ma brtags gcig pu na dga' ba ma lus pa gzugs brnyan la sogs pa lta bur/ yang dag par na rang bzhin med par rtogs na nyon mongs pa dang/ shes bya'i sgrib pa mtha' dag spong bar 'gyur te/ This is the section before verse 1 of the body text, in which the author sets out the purpose for which the treatise was written.

[54]Lopez (1987:107ff.) explores the debate between Bhāvaviveka and Buddhapālita on these topics.

[55]For a rNying ma presentation of the two schools of Madhyamaka, see 'Appendix 8: The Madhyamaka School' in *Treasury of Precious Qualities: A Commentary* by Kangyur Rinpoche, Shambhala, Boston and London, 2001, pp.323-339. This Appendix is based on material from Mi pham's *mKhas 'jug*, from the commentaries by Khenpo Yonten Gyamtso on 'Jig med gling pa's *Yon ten rin po che'i mdzod*, and from Dudjom Rinpoche's *sdom gsum*.

We can summarise[56] the issues at stake here as follows. Due to divergent interpretations of scripture, Bhāvaviveka defines the term 'self' *(ātman; bdag)* taken in isolation (and not within expressions such as *dharmanairātmya*) as referring exclusively to an attribute falsely ascribed to the person *(pudgala, gang zag)*; whereas Buddhapālita[57] takes it as a term for entityness *(svabhāva; ngo bo nyid)* applicable to either persons or phenomena. Bhāvaviveka's definition of self is associated with his assertion that there is a difference in subtlety between the selflessness of persons *(pudgalanairātmya; gang zag gi bdag med)* and the selflessness of phenomena *(dharmanairātmya; chos kyi bdag med)* resulting in his claim that Hīnayāna schools lead the adept only to the former, while Mahāyāna schools lead adepts to complete buddhahood which is the realization of both types of self-lessness. By contrast, Buddhapālita contends that the basis for the distinction between the two types of selflessness is not a difference in subtlety but merely a difference from the point of view of the bases that are selfless. Thus it is said that Prāsaṅgikas distinguish the two selflessnesses from the point of view of that which is selfless, while Svātantrikas make the distinction from the point of view of how they are selfless.[58] Finally, Bhāva-viveka's assertion on the difference in subtlety stems from his particular understanding of the obscurations that are purified on the path. The conception of a self of persons *(pud-galātman, gang zag gi bdag)* constitutes the main afflictive obstruction *(kleśāvaraṇa; nyon sgrib)* that impedes liberation from cyclic existence, while that which obstructs the attainment of buddhahood, termed the main obstruction to omniscience *(jñeyāvaraṇa; shes sgrib)* is the conception of true existence. It follows that for Bhāvaviveka,[59] the dis-tinction between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna is one of wisdom, not simply one of method;

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[56]The following analysis is drawn from Lopez (1987:82-133), who bases his presentation on works by lCang skya and dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po, in particular. For more detail, see Joe Bransford Wilson (1984:781-802); J. Hopkins (1983:175-196); Donald S. Lopez (1987:104-133); Sopa and Hopkins (1989: 285-297).

[57]P 5252, vol.95, 91.3.6-91.4.1.

[58]*Grub mtha' dang nang rig skor*, no author given, Council for Tibetan Education, Dharamsala, India, 1970, p.79. Cited in Lopez (1987:108).

[59]P 5253, vol.95, 187.4.4-187.5.6.

but for Prāsaṅgikas it is based on method.

Let us now consider how these questions and definitions can be interpreted in the MAL. Firstly, as Śāntarakṣita asserted in the citation from his *vṛtti* above, liberation depends on eliminating both the obscurations to knowledge *(shes bya'i sgrib pa)* and the afflictive emotions *(nyon mongs sgrib pa)*. And this is brought about by realizing the lack of inherent existence of both self and phenomena. Now as we have seen, the MAL examines one by one the full range of phenomena that are held to have true existence; but what of the self? Will simply refuting the true existence of entities be sufficient to dissolve our attachment to self? Unlike the *Madhyamakāvatara*, for example, in which Candrakīrti devotes separate sections of the text to a refutation of the true existence of phenomena and that of the self, the MAL does not address the true existence of the self in a distinct way. This raises two problems. First, what does it tells us about Śāntarakṣita's view of the relationship between the two selflessnesses? And second, does it mean that the MAL is not comprehensive? If so, does it fail to meet its soteriological purpose?

Before addressing these questions, it is necessary to explain what is meant by the assertion that Śāntarakṣita does not refute persons in a distinct way. In verse 9 of the MAL (analysed below in Chapter VI), he refutes the Vātsīputrīya theory of the *pudgala (gang zag)* which is, of course, a theory of persons. However, this verse only addresses the specific theory of the Vātsīputrīya school, not the concept of a self of persons in general nor, indeed, the equivalent concepts in other Buddhist schools. In particular, it does not address the various Mahāyāna definitions of what is meant by the subtle and the coarse self of persons, a noted area of controversy between Bhāvaviveka and Buddhapālita.[60] So in this sense, the MAL cannot be said to present a comprehensive refutation of the true

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[60]Lopez (1987:114ff.). For the Svātantrikas, the coarse conception of a self of persons is the conception of a

existence of the self of persons.

It is Mi pham's claim that despite this lacuna, the MAL does succeed in fulfilling its stated purpose, and in arguing his case he sets out his understanding on both the questions identified above.

> *In this text, all phenomena asserted in Buddhist and non-Buddhist systems—permanent entities, unconditioned [entities], persons, pervasive [entities], gross and subtle [entities], consciousness and so forth—may be made the subject [of the syllogism in verse 1]. This [same subject] includes all phenomena, both conditioned and unconditioned; all permanent and impermanent things, outer and inner, subject and object, pervading and non-pervading [entities], gross and subtle [things], the knowing mind and that which is known, etc. If, by this reasoning, one can show that none of these things truly exists, it will then be possible to eradicate the innate belief in the two kinds of self [that of persons and that of phenomena].*
>
> *Generally speaking, due to the power of the delusion that is innately present in their [mental] continuum, beings apprehend objects like vases as being really existent as such. Moreover, it is on the basis of the convention 'entity' that the concept 'non-entity' can be applied. Entities and non-entities are cognized and clung to as such. And thinking 'I am' in dependence on the five aggregates [that make up their] continua, in the absence of analytical investigation, the innate view of the transitory collection ('jig lta) also arises. Phenomena and the person, entities which are each clung to as being truly existent in this way, do have a basis of labelling: the aggregates and so on.*
>
> *Furthermore, owing to their incorrect reasoning, [ordinary] people engage with compound [entities such as] permanent entities, the self and so on, and attribute inherent existence to things that are not real even on the conventional level, and [thus] become entangled in the fetters that bind the childish.*
>
> *Whether the refutation of one of these selves [imputed or innate] entails the refutation of the other [may be considered as follows].*

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permanent, single, independent self. The subtle conception is that of a substantially existent person in the sense of self-sufficiency. For the Prāsaṅgikas, the coarse conception of a self of persons is that of a substantially existent person in the sense of self-sufficiency, and the subtle conception is that of the person as inherently existent. These terms and definitions will be clarified below.

Whereas objects that are held to be permanent entities are refuted by arguments that disprove their existence, this [same strategy] cannot remove the innate apprehension and grasping to the ego, since this [apprehension] does not arise in relation to such entities. But if it is understood that the basis for this innate grasping [i.e. the aggregates] is not the self, [this] will demolish all theories upholding [the existence of] a self that is a permanent, functioning [thing], and so forth. Just as when one realizes that there is no such thing as the child of a barren woman, one will be equally convinced that there is no such thing as the child's colour.

If, therefore, it is established that persons and phenomena, whether conditioned or unconditioned, are without inherent existence because they have neither a unitary nor a multiple nature, there will be no further apprehension of the two kinds of self. This is because all objects of knowledge have been established to be without inherent existence.[61]

Mi pham asserts that by refuting the true existence of every category of phenomena, both conditioned and unconditioned, one is capable of eradicating attachment to both types of self, that of persons and phenomena. His argument is presented in terms of how delusion arises, and specifically how attachment to self arises. The innate ignorance *(ma rig pa lhan skyes)* which afflicts all beings in *saṃsāra* by definition, causes them to appre-

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[61]The translation of this passage has benefited from the oral explanation of it given by mKhan chen Pad ma shes rab in May 2001. The Tibetan text is in V.p.92-4 and C.p.126-8.
gzhung 'der rang gzhan gyi sde pas 'dod pa rtag dngos/ 'dus ma byas/ gang zag/ khyab pa/ rags pa/ phra ba/ zhes pa rnams chos can du bzung bas/ de rnams su rtag mi rtag/ phyi dang nang/ yul yul can/ khyab ma khyab/ rags pa phra ba/ zhes bya dang zhes pa sogs 'dus byas 'dus ma byas kyi chos kun 'du ba yin pas de rnams rigs pas bden med du grub na des bdag 'dzin lhan skyes gnyis po drung nas 'byin nus te/

spyir 'gro ba rnams kyi rgyud la lhan skyes kyi rmongs pa'i dbang gis bum sogs dngos po rnams la de dang der grub par 'dzin zhing/ dngos po la brten nas dngos med kyi tha snyad byed la/ dngos dang dngos med la de nyid du zhen pa dang/ rang rgyud kyi phung po lnga la brten nas nga'o snyam du ma brtags ma dpyad par 'dzin pa'i 'jig lta lhan skyes kyang 'byung zhing/ de ltar chos dang gang zag grub grub ltar zhen pa'i ngo po de dag gi gdags gzhi ni phung sogs yin la/

gzhan yang tha snyad du med bzhin log pa'i rgyu mtshan bzung ste rang blos nan gyis btags pa rtag dngos kyi bdag la sogs pa 'du shes sna tshogs 'jug cing zhen pa'i srad bus byis pa rnams bcings par gyur to/

de la de rnams gcig bkag pas gcig khegs pa dang mi khegs pa'i tshul ni/

rtag dngos su zhen pa'i yul rnams de dang de 'gog pa'i rigs pas bkag kyang/ de ngar 'dzin lhan skyes kyi rten ma yin pas da rung ngar 'dzin lhan skyes mi khegs kyang/ rang 'dzin lhan skyes gzung ba ltar gyi yul bdag med par zhes na/ bdag de rtag pa dang byed po sogs su 'dod pa'i kun btags thams cad khegs te/ mo gzham gyi bu med par zhes na de'i kha dog kyang med par thag chod pa bzhin no/

de ltar 'dir yang gang zag dang 'dus byas 'dus ma byas kyi chos thams cad bden pa'i gcig du bral gyis rang bzhin med par grub na bdag gnyis kyi 'dzin pa ga la 'byung ste/ shes bya thams cad rang bzhin med par gtan la phab grub pa'i phyir ro//

hend physical entities such as vases and so on in such a way that they appear to exist just as they are apprehended. In perceiving a vase, for example, deluded beings automatically think that what they perceive exists as such. Once this notion of being or true existence is established in their minds, the negative of non-existence or absence is logically derived from it and reified as well. The result is that on account of their innate ignorance *(ma rig pa lhan skyes)* deluded beings believe that things either truly exist or that they are truly non-existent, and are attached to this way of understanding as being the true, correct way of understanding.

Now, if the Buddhist contention is that such an understanding is incorrect and in fact deluded the question arises as to what exactly a deluded being perceives. In other words, what is the precise nature of the delusion? How is it that I see a vase and think it truly exists when it does not? Mi pham identifies three main characteristics of delusion. The first is that any perception under the influence of *ma rig pa lhan skyes* appears to be correct only because it is unanalysed. Analysis soon shows it to be fraught with contradictions and inconsistencies. The second characteristic is that such perception is rooted in the perceiver's belief that he or she truly exists, and this belief in turn rests on taking his/her aggregates *(phung po; skandhas)* as the basis of his/her identity. The third characteristic applies to those who assert the existence of phenomena that are not even apprehended in a conventional way. That is, they are not perceived, so there can be no consensus about their existence; and yet despite this some people assert them as a result of incorrect logical inference. Mi pham argues that such assertions stem from an attachment to existence that has not been abandoned, and that therefore binds such proponents to *saṃsāra*.

Turning specifically to the attachment to self, Mi pham distinguishes two types: the innate

(arising from *ma rig pa lhan skyes,* innate ignorance) and the imputed (arising from *ma rig pa'i kun brtags*, the ignorance associated with imputation). He claims that a refutation of the innate self will invalidate the imputed self, while the reverse does not hold. This is because a refutation of the imputed self depends on a refutation of the basis of imputation *(gdags gzhi)* of that self, in this case of the aggregates *(phung po)*, but since this is not the basis for the innate apprehension of self this latter will not have been eradicated. Mi pham argues that the method of refuting the innate apprehension of self is not related to the refutation of the imputed self; rather, it depends on the refutation of the true existence of objects of cognition. When such objects are shown to be empty of true existence, the innate self of the cognizer of those objects will thereby be understood as empty too. In other words, when *bden grub* is refuted then *bden 'dzin* is destroyed. Since Śāntarakṣita refutes the true existence of all possible objects of cognition *(shes bya thams cad)*, he thereby refutes attachment to the two 'selves'.

Mi pham's argument distinguishes two fundamental types of delusion. Innate ignorance *(ma rig pa lhan skyes)* characterizes the mental continuum of every being in *saṃsāra.* Any cognition that occurs under its influence is characteristically unanalysed and uninvestigated. In this sense, one can understand innate ignorance as pre-rational and acting almost as a mental reflex that underpins all deluded perception. Its effect is to lead us to believe that what appears to be a vase (e.g. round, blue, with a flowery pattern, and holding water) corresponds exactly to what a vase actually is, so that the way things appear corresponds to how they actually are. We assume, for no good reason but with anthropocentric bias, that human perception holds a privileged position with regard to apprehending reality as it is. And yet all beings in *saṃsāra*, in whatever realm, suffer from a similar process of delusion. Crucially, cognition under the influence of innate ignorance is also characterized by the cognizer's belief in his or her own existence, giving

rise to such thoughts as 'I can see a vase' and so on.

One's belief in one's own existence is imputed on the basis of one's apprehension of the aggregates, which brings us to the second type of ignorance or delusion: *ma rig pa'i kun brtags,* or the ignorance associated with imputation. This second type of ignorance entails the action of naming what appears to perception, with the associated belief that the name actually designates an existent thing. It follows that names are held to refer to things that are imputedly existent and even that, for realist schools of thought, if a thing has a name it must exist. The most significant element of Mi pham's argument at this point is that he claims that this dual process of ignorance operates similarly in relation to phenomena and to persons. So on the level of imputation, the self is imputed on the basis of the apprehension of its aggregates *(phung po)* in exactly the same way as a vase is imputed on the basis of the apprehension of the characteristics of a vase. And likewise, on the level of innate ignorance, the deluded consciousness is endowed with a pre-rational sense of the self's existence in exactly the same way as it has a pre-rational sense of the existence of any object of knowledge.

We should note, then, that Mi pham's explanation follows the Prāsaṅgika view that there is no difference in subtlety between realizing the emptiness of self and realizing the emptiness of phenomena. The difference between the two relates to the basis to which the view of emptiness is applied, and not to any difference in the nature of the emptiness that is realized. In addition, we should note that Mi pham assumes that the self of a person is predicated on the basis of the five aggregates *(phung po)*, not on the mental consciousness as it is for the Sautrāntika-Svātantrika school of Bhāvaviveka,[62] nor, indeed, on the continuum of consciousness which is asserted to be the basis of imputation of the person for

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[62]See Lopez (1987:110-111). Source text: P 5626, vol.96, 34.4.5-6.

Yogācāra-Svātantrikas according to dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po.[63] The result is a curious case of Mi pham making sense of Śāntarakṣita's view partly in terms of what are generally taken to be Prāsaṅgika tenets, and partly in terms of what are acknowledged to be Svātantrika tenets.

The problem with Mi pham's reasoning is the link he makes between refuting objects of cognition and the *entailment* that thereby the cognizer's innate self is refuted too. Does this follow? It certainly would not be correct to say that one's innate self is an object of cognition like any other, since it cannot be apprehended by others whereas objects such as vases can. So if we accept that a distinction must be made between the innate self and cognized objects, why does a refutation of the objects entail that of the self? This seems odd. If I come to realize that an object which I held to exist does not ultimately truly exist why should I call into question my own existence? It does not appear that Mi pham is saying that if one realizes the emptiness of phenomena one can, at will, switch one's focus to the person and realize this is empty as well. He is not claiming that the two realizations occur successively, the one bringing about the other. On the contrary, he seems to be asserting that the two occur simultaneously, within a single process.

This discussion is significant for the characterization of Śāntarakṣita's school of thought since it was generally recognized in Tibet that this simultaneity of process in the refutation of *dharmanairātmya (chos kyi bdag med)* and *pudgalanairātmya (gang zag gi bdag med)* is a special tenet of the Svātantrika system. Lopez expresses this as follows:

> *The Prāsaṅgikas assert that Bodhisattvas must first abandon the obstructions to liberation—the afflictive obstructions—before beginning to work on the obstructions to omniscience, but the Svātantrikas assert that Bodhisattvas begin to abandon the two obstructions simultaneously.*[64]

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[63]Sopa and Hopkins (1989:287).

[64]Lopez (1987:117). See also Sopa and Hopkins (1976:130).

Curiously, Mi pham does not argue the Prāsaṅgika case here—perhaps in deference to Śāntarakṣita, or possibly because he himself agrees with Śāntarakṣita on this point. Whatever the reason, he acknowledges that in this regard Śāntarakṣita conforms to doxographic descriptions of the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka viewpoint. dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po clarifies the position thus:

> *It is said that, through the nine steps of the path of meditation, the seeds of the 16 afflictive emotions and the seeds of the 108 obstructions to omniscience—which are to be abandoned by the path of meditation—are gradually abandoned. Finally in dependence on the uninterrupted path at the end of the continuum [of existence as a sentient being] the innate afflictive emotions and the innate obstructions to omniscience are simultaneously abandoned. In the next moment highest enlightenment* (bla na med pa'i byang chub; anuttarasambuddha) *is attained.* [65]

For the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka school, the process of purification and abandonment of the obscurations due to the ignorance associated with imputation—including both afflictive obscurations and obscurations to omniscience—is a gradual one, and takes place on the fourth of the five paths, namely the path of meditation. At the conclusion of this path, what is left to be abandoned are all those obscurations due to innate ignorance, including both innate afflictive obscurations and innate obscurations to omniscience. These various innate obscurations are not abandoned gradually and successively, but simultaneously. At this point enlightenment is attained, and one enters the fifth path, the path of no more learning.

The explanation given by dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po accords with that of Mi pham. It highlights the fact that Yogācāra-Svātantrikas, unlike their Sautrāntika-Svātantrika cousins, see the fundamental distinction as being between innate ignorance *(ma rig pa lhan skyes)* and the ignorance associated with imputation *(ma rig pa'i kun brtags)*, and not between afflictive obscurations *(nyon mong pa'i sgrib pa)* and obscurations to knowledge

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[65] *Grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa rin po che'i phreng ba*, chapter on the Svātantrika school, translation by Sopa and Hopkins (1976:295).

(shes bya sgrib pa). The soteriological process entails the abandonment of all obscurations due to *ma rig pa'i kun brtags* in a first stage, and in a second stage the abandonment of all obscurations due to *ma rig pa lhan skyes*. This clarification accounts for Mi pham's contention that the innate sense of self cannot be eliminated by means of a refutation of objects of cognition whose existence is imputed; it is eliminated in a second stage, simultaneously with the elimination of the innate obscurations to omniscience. In conclusion, therefore, it can be admitted that the MAL fulfils its soteriological goal according to the tenets of the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka school, which do not entail any necessity to treat persons as a separate object of refutation.

The logic of this argument appears coherent until one recalls the three stages of the MAL which Śāntarakṣita himself outlined in his *vṛtti* on the first verse. These stages were explained by lCang skya[66] as: 1) the ascertainment of the selflessness of persons; 2) the ascertainment of the lack of duality of subject and object; and 3) the ascertainment of the non-true existence of the mind. There is clearly a discrepancy between his interpretation and those of Mi pham and mKon mchog 'jig med dbang po. lCang skya's interpretation is in accord with the Sautrāntika-Svātantrika view which holds that the refutation of the self of persons, being a coarser form of self, must be made first, and that of phenomena, being more subtle, made second. But is the Sautrāntika-Svātantrika model applicable to Śāntarakṣita? Let us look again at what is said in the *vṛtti*:

> *By relying on Mind Only, things that are asserted to be external to the mind or manifestations of the mind, such as I and mine, subject and object, and so forth, are effortlessly realized to be without a nature.*[67]

It is not clear whether Śāntarakṣita is indicating a logical or soteriological order here, or

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[66]Lopez (1987:345-8). See V.5 above.

[67]sems tsam gyi tshul la brten nas/ mtshungs par ldan pa dang bcas pa'i sems las phyi rol du 'dod pa bdag dang bdag gi dang/ gzung ba dang 'dzin pa la sogs pa rang bzhin med par tshegs med pa kho nar rtogs so//

whether he is simply listing examples of what is to be refuted. Comparing this sentence to the thematic structure of the MAL outlined above, there is no evident correspondence between their respective order of topics. On the contrary, it is arguable that the refutation of the true existence 'of that which is mind only' in verse 92 is the final refutation of the self of persons, defined as a self mistakenly predicated to the non-intentional mental continuum. In fact the term 'self' *(bdag)* is actually used in this verse, and even if we take this to mean 'entityness', when referring to the non-intentional mind it is reasonable to suppose that it refers to the entityness of persons rather than to that of phenomena.

> **Based on the standpoint of Cittamātra, one must know that external entities do not [truly] exist. Based on this standpoint [i.e. of the non-intrinsic nature of all *dharma*-s]], one must know that there is no self at all even in that [which is Mind Only].**
>
> sems tsam la ni brten nas su// phyi rol dngos med shes par bya//
> tshul 'dir brten nas de la yang// shin tu bdag med shes par bya//

Mi pham's interpretation therefore appears more acceptable, while lCang skya would seem to have painted Śāntarakṣita unnecessarily with a Sautrāntika-Svātantrika brush.

To conclude this section, let us summarise Mi pham's analysis of the various features of Śāntarakṣita's viewpoint which fall respectively into the Prāsaṇgika and Svātantrika systems. Śāntarakṣita is a Svātantrika insofar as he asserts the simultaneity of abandonment of the various different types of obscurations resulting from innate ignorance. He is also a Svātantrika insofar as he accepts the existence of a self-cognizing, non-intentional consciousness. But he shares with Prāsaṅgikas the view that there is no difference in subtlety between the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena. He apparently does not share the Svātantrika tenet asserting that the basis of imputation of the person is the mental continuum (Yogācāra-Svātantrika) or the mental consciousness (Sautrāntika-Svātantrika) although it will become clear in Chapter VIII below that he accepts 1) Sautrāntika and 2) Yogācāra views provisionally in terms of relative truth.

V.8 Wholes and parts

V.8.1 Monadic and dyadic applications of the 'neither one nor many' argument

The final question that we shall address regarding the first verse of the MAL is what precisely is meant by an entity being one *(gcig)* and being many *(du ma)*. Tom Tillemans[68] has applied the principles of modern set theory and logic to elucidate this. He distinguishes between what he calls the argument's monadic (one place) and dyadic (two place) senses. According to the former, the question is whether a certain phenomenon is one thing or many different things, where these predicates show a quality. For instance, whether *x* is both green *and* square, and so on. But according to the latter, the question is about whether a certain phenomenon is one with—in the sense of identical with—another phenomenon, or different from it, as in the case of, say, the self and the aggregates. In this dyadic sense a relationship is involved, whereas in the monadic sense there is none.

In his *Tarkajvālā*, Bhāvaviveka employs the argument in its dyadic form. He says:

> *Even the Tathāgata does not ultimately exist because of not being observed to be the same as or different from his body like self, sentient being, person, and so on.*[69]

But which form applies in the MAL? Just as with the issue of *svātantra* and *prasaṅga* alternatives, the answer is not clear-cut. On the face of it, the argument in the MAL is of the monadic variety if we refer to Kamalaśīla's commentary:[70]

> *what we call oneness (or unitariness) is partlessness*
> *gcig pa zhes bya ba ni cha med pa nyid do//*

Oneness signifies partlessness, and partlessness is a quality that can be ascribed to an entity. We could say that 'God is partless', for example. It is on account of this that the translations 'unitariness'/'unitary' and 'multiplicity'/'multiple' have been preferred in this

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[68] In particular see Tillemans (1983).
[69] Cited in Lopez (1987:324).
[70] MALP Peking ed. 89a. Ichigō (1985), p.23 line 9.

study to 'oneness'/'one' and 'manyness'/'many'. Such as it is, the English connotation of the second set of terms is dyadic, whereas the connotation of the first set is monadic. Most of the commentarial literature points to the monadic form of the argument, explaining the MAL in terms of an examination of whether the various entities under scrutiny have parts *(cha bcas)* or not *(cha med)*. But Tillemans (1983) shows that Tsong kha pa[71] took the *ekānakaviyogahetu* in its dyadic sense, transposing the identity/difference relationship to a whole and its parts. Such a dyadic relationship posits wholes separately from their parts, and rests on Tsong kha pa's particular definition of wholes as actual conventional existents, permanent but not eternal, that are not identifiable with parts. Tillemans cites this as an example of the rational reconstruction of Śāntarakṣita's thought by Tibetans, reflecting the text of the MAL but taking the argument further than the author did himself. In summary, whether the 'neither one nor many' argument as used in the MAL is construed as being monadic or dyadic depends on whether one takes wholes to exist separately from their parts or not.

V.8.2 Mereological analysis

The philosophical analysis of wholes and parts is a live topic in contemporary philosophy, and sometimes draws on mereology which is the mathematical theory of parts, formal mereologies being axiomatic systems taking as primitive the part-whole relation and defining a proper part as a part not identical to the whole.[72] Mereology is of interest to the present study insofar as it offers conceptual tools with which to question Śāntarakṣita's assumptions about the whole-part relation, and can thereby lead to a more precise and

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[71]In his *dbU ma rgyan gyi zin bris* (P. 153 Nga 71b7-84b8); Tillemans (1983:308-9). Tsong kha pa's four-point analysis can be summarised as follows. 1.All entities have parts. 2.If an entity is truly established, either the parts are 'essentially' identical with it, or different from it. 3a. If the parts are essentially identical with it, then either the part-holder is many or all the parts are the same. 3b. If the parts are essentially different from the part-holder, they would be unrelated to it. 4.Therefore, entities are not ultimately established.

[72]From *What Collectives Are: Agency, Individualism and Legal Theory* by David Copp, in Dialogue XXIII, 1984, pp.249-69.

comprehensive evaluation of the philosophical implications of the MAL argument. However, a number of philosophers, like E.J. Lowe, have a problem with mereology, finding it too restrictive. Taking account of these different positions we will proceed systematically, looking first at what type of whole Śāntarakṣita is addressing, and then considering his definition of what a part is. Next we will evaluate his principle that there is no third alternative between having parts and not having parts. Finally, we will analyse his view of the whole-part relation, and conclude with an appraisal of the Mādhyamika approach to wholes and parts.

V.8.2.a) Types of wholes

Various types of whole are defined in mereology, and while the precise use of terms varies from one philosopher to another, the main principles denoted are standard. The peculiarity of *sets* is that they are identical to the set of individual members or parts. In other words, if there are changes in the parts (e.g. one part more or less) the set itself changes. By contrast, *aggregates*, *piles* or *blobs* are looser groupings which boil down to quantifying plurally over individuals as for example with a pile of stones. The peculiarity of piles is that they do not have a fixed internal organisation or structure, so for example the stones could be moved and the pile change shape, and it would still be a pile. Thirdly, *groups* are wholes that can survive changes in their parts or members, as in the case of a nerve in which a particular cell dies or a new one appears.

From the metaphysical point of view, these various types of whole can be categorized into two main types.[73] According to some philosophers, wholes have a substratum which is a bare particular with an identity independent of the properties with which it is found. Such a substratum can have no attributes itself or there is infinite regress. The relation between

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[73]Loux (1998:92ff.).

the attributes and the substratum is taken to be unanalysable and ontologically primitive, and explained informally in terms of their occurring together, or being present together. But the ontological glue which ensures that an entity is a unity cannot be clarified further. What is clear is that the substratum is ontologically primary and more fundamental than the attributes. Indeed attributes are related to the substratum only contingently, entailing that changes in attributes do not necessarily entail a numerically different particular. This contrasts with the second main type of whole asserted by metaphysicians, which is called a *bundle* or *cluster*. Bundles have no substratum; they are particulars constituted exclusively by the properties associated with them. Bundles are favoured by empiricists who reject substrata on the grounds that having no attributes they cannot be apprehended. Bundle theorists hold a one-category ontology, since at the most basic level there are only attributes. These attributes are ascribed to the particular of necessity, so that a change in attributes entails a change in particular. Bundles are equivalent to mereological sets, while wholes with substrata may be comparable with mereological groups insofar as both assert the survival of the whole despite changes in its parts.

So is Tillemans' choice of set theory to explicate the *ekānekaviyogahetu* apposite or not? Does Śāntarakṣita's understanding of wholes correspond to the definition of a set? It does insofar as Buddhists maintain that wholes are constantly changing as their parts change.[74] The Buddhist view is comparable to the perdurantist position which maintains that wholes are merely synchronic time-slices of continually changing collections of parts.[75] But an important difference between sets and Buddhist wholes is that sets are abstract, and wholes are apprehended on the basis of sense perception. The latter evolve and change

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[74]Leaving aside the special case of Tsong kha pa's view, which is not that of Śāntarakṣita nor that of rNying ma pas such as Mi pham. For a discussion of the differences between dGe lug pa and Sa skya pa views on wholes and parts, see Klein (1998:84-88). For a discussion of dGe lugs pa and Sa skya interpretations of Dharmakīrti's understanding of wholes and parts, see Dreyfus (1997:83ff.).
[75]Loux (1998:204 ff.).

while paradoxically giving the perceiver an impression of uninterrupted continuity and numerical identity; but the same cannot be said of sets. Sets are simply what they are axiomatically defined to be, and nobody would contend that a change in their members or parts could be a cause of delusion for the mathematician. It would therefore be more fitting to say that wholes in Buddhism are not sets but bundles, that is, apprehendable particulars which are nothing more than the mereological sum of their parts.

This difference is significant for the MAL. If Śāntarakṣita refutes the true existence of wholes it is because deluded beings *erroneously* think that wholes exist. Buddhist analysis explains that the concept of 'whole' is imputed by inference to that which is perceived by the senses. The senses apprehend things non-conceptually, and conceptuality enters into knowledge at a second stage when inferences are made on the basis of sense data. Whichever type of whole Śāntarakṣita has in mind, wholes only exist imputedly *(prajñaptisat)*.

Now it can be argued that the Buddhist analysis confuses what are in fact two distinct things: the identity conditions for the whole, and its composition. The Buddhist refutation of persons illustrated by the example of a chariot breaks the whole down into its constituent parts and assumes that the whole is nothing other than the mereological sum of those parts.[76] Whether or not the idea of a whole includes *both* its constituents *and* the way they are organised is not considered, leaving open the possibility that wholes are simply *aggregates.*[77] The argument is concerned with showing that wholes can be reduced to their parts and do not exist separately or independently from them; in other words, using the terminology given above the argument in the *Milindapañha* is concerned with proving that wholes do not have substrata. But in the case of a chariot, it would be

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[76]Milindapañha, I.1.

[77]The constituents of a person are termed *skandhas*, meaning heaps, so it is possible that the aggregate meaning of whole was indeed envisaged.

possible to have a pile of the entire number of its constituent parts and yet nobody would claim that such a pile is a chariot. The analysis in the *Milindapañha* does not go far enough and its definition of wholes is inadequate. It is on this account that Candrakīrti included 'form' or 'shape' in the seven-cornered reasoning used in Madhyamaka.[78] The sixth of his seven-cornered reasonings is that a whole is not the shape of its parts. This idea could well include the notion of organisation since the shape of a thing is related to the way its parts are organised, so this argument would rule out wholes being taken as aggregates or piles. Yet even if we accept this, the fact that organisation and parts are addressed separately by two separate reasonings is still inadequate. A group consists of both parts and their organisation; so to refute the existence of a group, one must refute parts and organisation together. Mādhyamika reasonings do not do this unless the seven-cornered reasoning is taken as cumulative.

So there are problems with identifying the Buddhist concept of wholes with either sets, aggregates or groups. The concept of bundles appears to be the closest since Buddhists definitely reject substrata. Śāntarakṣita asserts that the refutation of substance or substrata *(ātman)* is what distinguishes Buddhism from all other views.[79] Yet even with bundles there are metaphysical problems, since bundle theorists accept the ontological existence of attributes and Mādhyamikas do not. This distinguishes the Mādhyamika critique of wholes and parts from the Abhidharma critique, since there certain *dharma*-s are considered to have substantial existence *(dravyasat)* while this is not the case in Madhyamaka. This point is discussed in the next Chapter.

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[78]Candrakīrti's seven-cornered reasoning applied to a chariot is as follows. A chariot does not inherently exist because of not being its parts; because of not being other than its parts; because of not being in its parts; because of not being that in which its parts exist; because of not possessing parts; because of not being the shape of its parts; and because of not being the composite of its parts.

[79]TS 3340. etac ca sugatasyeṣṭam ādau nairātmyakīrtanāt/ sarvatīrthakṛtām tasmāt sthito mūrdhani tathāgataḥ// See also Murti (1955:10).

Finally, we will consider the views of E.J.Lowe[80] who finds mereology too restrictive for the definitions of wholes he wants to accept. He distinguishes between aggregates and integrates as follows. Aggregates, while consisting of the sums of their parts, are not to be identified with such sums because an additional constraint on their persistence conditions is set by the requirement of adhesion of parts.[81] That is to say, aggregates are not scatterable. Integrates are composite particulars which are not identical with the sums of their parts nor with any aggregates consisting of any sum of their parts.[82] They can survive the destruction or removal of at least some of their parts. In addition, artefactual integrates like clocks are scatterable. By making these definitions, Lowe highlights two points. Firstly, he shows that mereology cannot offer an adequate account of wholes and parts because it does not take persistence conditions into account. The main difference between aggregates and integrates, in his terminology, concerns their respective persistence conditions. Secondly, he emphasizes the fact there are no adequate criteria for individuating a thing's parts, that is, parts have no clear identity criteria. Arguably, for instance, if a tree loses an atom it continues to be the same tree but if it loses a branch it does not. This consideration leads us to take a closer look at parts.

V.8.2.b) What is a part?

It was shown earlier in this chapter that Śāntarakṣita takes the concept of part *(cha)* in a broad sense, and includes within it both spatial parts and temporal parts. Spatial parts are characteristic of material objects while temporal parts apply to minds. Thus material objects are analysed into partless particles or atoms,[83] which are conceived as three-

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[80]*Kinds of Being: A Study of Individuation, Identity and the Logic of Sortal Terms*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1989.
[81]ibid., p.88.
[82]ibid., pp.89-90.
[83]The term 'atom' is derived from the Greek *atomoi* meaning 'unsplittable'. It is often used by philosophers who analyse matter into indivisible particles, in fact they are called atomists. In this study, however, the term 'particle' has been preferred since nowadays the term atom has a more specific definition and we know that atoms *are* splittable. As there are smaller particles even than atoms, and as scientists have successively identified more and more subtle particles of matter during the 20th century, the word 'particle' is used here

dimensional, while minds are analysed into indivisible moments of consciousness. These categories are found in the *Abhidharmakośa*[84] and the categories, if not their contents, are uncontroversial in Buddhist philosophy. Śāntarakṣita's innovation in this area lies in his application of the arguments on material particles to the existence of minds. In verse 49 we read:

> **If consciousness were admitted [to consist of as many parts] as the number of [its various] aspects, then it would be difficult to avoid the kind of criticism that is made regarding [the reality of] particles.**
>
> *ci ste rnam pa'i grangs bzhin du// rnam par shes pa khas len na//*
> *de tshe rdul phran 'drar 'gyur ba// dpyad pa 'di las bzlog par dka'//*

The argument that holds that there are as many consciousnesses as there are aspects in perception *(rnam pa)*[85] can be refuted in the same way as the existence of material particles has been refuted (in verses 11-15). The latter are refuted on the grounds that they can not be unitary since they have directions and sides, and relate spatially with other proximate particles.[86] So if we apply this reasoning to minds and mental aspects, it follows that aspects *(rnam pa)* cannot be unitary, since each one is related to others, and if they are not unitary they cannot be taken as truly existing with a numerical identity. Yet although Śāntarakṣita brings together material and mental, spatial and temporal criteria in this example, the similarity between them is in terms of the argument that refutes each; matter is not reduced to mind or vice versa, and space is not conflated with time or vice versa. Rather, we could interpret Śāntarakṣita as implying that the way we talk about matter is similar to the way we talk about minds.

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to denote whatever is identified by an opponent as being the smallest and subtlest element of matter.
[84]AK I.13d and AK I.44d. Matter is defined as impenetrable, resistant and always locatable. No two material things can occupy the same space, and the relationship between atoms is linked to proximity. The support of consciousness, on the other hand, is an immediately preceding consciousness.
[85]The various theories concerning aspects in perception are discussed in Chapter VIII. 'Aspect' (*mam pa*) is defined in this context as the mode of appearance of an object.
[86]This refutation is examined in Chapter VII below.

Interestingly, although the spatial/material and temporal/mental divide is uncontroversial in Buddhism, it would be seriously questioned by many Western philosophers, and in particular by proponents of endurantism and perdurantism. Endurantists[87] regard as incomprehensible the notion that entities have temporal parts, and accept only that they have spatial parts. This applies to material objects, of course, but minds are not generally treated as a separate category. They assert that concrete particulars persist through time by existing wholly and completely at each of several different times. Persistence through time is construed as the numerical identity of a thing existing at t_1 with a thing existing at t_2. Endurantists are typically presentists, meaning that they consider only what exists in the present time as real. This is why they can reject the idea of temporal parts. The endurantist is concerned that his philosophical theory validates prephilosophical conceptions of the world that assert the identity of things through time and through change. This position leads to the more radical 'mereological essentialism' propounded by Chisholm, according to which a thing's parts are essentially and necessarily parts of it.[88] It is a position that claims coherence at the price of postulating certain primary ontological entities for which it is impossible to survive the loss of a part. Other things like desks and chairs are not primary wholes in the strict philosophical sense, only in the 'loose and popular' sense. Persons, however, he construes as wholes in the strict philosophical sense to account for the experience of unity of consciousness. It follows that mereological essentialism posits primary entities as building blocks of reality, and it is these that remain always whole and complete and cannot survive any loss or change of parts. This might account for the fact that endurantism has often gone hand in hand with Aristotelian substance theories, or substrata.

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[87]Loux (1998:203-232).

[88]"Parts as essential to their wholes" by Roderick Chisholm, in *Review of Metaphysics,* 1973.

Perdurantists, on the other hand, assert that material objects have both spatial and temporal parts. They view reality as four-dimensional. Temporal parts are not merely abstractions, like a set theoretical entity; they are things that have properties in the way spatial parts do. Perdurantists reject pre-philosophical notions of diachronic sameness, because there is no literal numerical identity through time and through change. Concrete particulars are like aggregates of their temporal parts. What exists at different times, termed the temporal slices or temporal parts of a particular, are things related to it as parts to a whole. Perdurantists have an eternalist view of time, refusing to privilege the present metaphysically. Four-dimensional reality or spacetime can be dissected in many different ways, and each chunk of spacetime is as real as another. Perdurantists assert that the temporal parts of concrete particulars enter into serial relations of spatiotemporal proximity, resulting in a spatiotemporal connectedness. Thus the spatiotemporally adjacent parts of a particular are very similar to each other so that the whole changes only gradually over time. Moreover, temporal parts are causally responsible for the existence and character of the temporal parts that succeed them.

Much more could be said of the different theories on space and time, as well as wholes and parts, that have been put forward by Western philosophers. A full discussion of all the issues, and a thorough evaluation of the various Buddhist views on them in the light of Western ideas, would merit a separate thesis of its own. Here, we can only briefly identify the key characteristics of Śāntarakṣita's position. Matter is defined as the opposite of mind entailing a commitment to two principles that are not reducible the one to the other, but neither of which exist ultimately.[89] Śāntarakṣita is commited to the view that three-dimensional space is a specific characteristic of matter. The character of minds is that

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[89]MAL verse 16. "Consciousness is intrinsically opposed to insentient matter." rnam shes bems po'i rang bzhin las// bzlog pa rab tu skye ba ste//

they are not three-dimensional or locatable, but are determined by time. It follows that the identity conditions of what counts as a part *(cha)* of a material object cannot be the same as those of what counts as a part *(cha)* of a consciousness. Material parts are defined as indivisible particles whereas mental parts are defined as moments of consciousness (Sautrāntika) or aspects (Cittamātra). Whatever their differences, both types of part play similar metaphysical roles within their respective domains and can therefore be talked about, and refuted, by the same argument. In this case, it is considered legitimate to apply the 'neither one nor many' argument to both spatial and temporal parts, and to both material and mental wholes, because the principles of unitariness and multiplicity apply to all of these albeit in ways that are generically particular.

V.8.2.c) Third alternatives

Śāntarakṣita takes it as given that an entity is either partless *(cha med)* or it has parts *(cha dang bcas)* with no third alternative, and the main thrust of his argument is that *if* an entity has parts *then* it cannot be ontologically real.[90] But in Western philosophy there have been several attempts at finding alternative solutions to the whole-part problem. It is necessary to consider how successful these are to determine whether Śāntarakṣita's principle of no third alternative is justified.

One of these solutions is termed substance theory (from the Greek *ousia*, derived from the Greek root for *to be*).[91] Based on Aristotle, this theory rejects the dichotomy between wholes and parts—entailing that a thing is either a whole or a part, with no third alternative—by asserting that every entity has a core or essence with which its parts are in contingent relationship. The core or essence of a concrete particular cannot be identified with

[90]MAL verse 62. See note 33 above.
[91]Loux (1998:117 ff.).

the thing itself, rather it is a more essential part of that entity than the other parts. It is also a necessary part of the entity whereas the other parts are contingent. An ontological distinction is therefore made between different categories of part so that 'part' is no longer metaphysically univocal. The whole-part distinction becomes complex rather than binary.

Arguably, this solution does not in fact solve the difficulty because Aristotelians displace the problem from whole-part relationships to the relationship between a thing and its kind. Kinds are not attributes, parts or constituents; they are *what* a thing is. Generic kinds are considered irreducibly unified forms of being which can be multiply instantiated. For the kind 'human being' to be instantiated twice is for two human beings to exist. Therefore if Śāntarakṣita were to refute this view by means of the 'neither one nor many' argument, all he would need to do is apply the argument to the relationship between kinds and the entities that instantiate them. How can a kind be a unified form of being, and yet be instantiated in a plural number of entities? From this viewpoint, the modification in whole-part relationships is no solution.

Another potential solution is advanced by the theory of supervenience. Supervenience[92] is the thesis that one domain (D1) depends entirely on another (D2) even though there are no systematic links between them, and, in particular, even though there is no causal relationship between D2 and D1. It follows that D1 is given by D2, and no change can take place in D1 without change in D2, but the converse does not hold. Supervenience relationships usually have three characteristics. (1) *Property covariation* means that if two things are indiscernible in base properties, they must be indiscernible in supervenient properties. (2) *Dependence* entails that supervenient properties are dependent on, or deter-

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[92]See the entry under *'supervenience'* by Jaegwon Kim in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Samuel Guttenplan, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, pp.575-583.

mined by, their subvenient bases. And (3) *non-reducibility* ensures that supervenient properties are not reducible to base properties. The idea of supervenience has been used in philosophy of mind, especially in non-reductive physicalism which wants to assert that the mental depends on the physical without being reducible to it. It is applied in ethics to explain that the moral supervenes on the descriptive. More recently it has been extended to the social sciences to argue that groups or crowds supervene on their individual members.[93] And supervenience has also been applied in mereology.

The advantage of supervenience is that it allows for the determination of A by B without reduction of A to B. If we apply it to the domain of mereology, it postulates a relationship between wholes and parts that is one of asymetrical co-variation. For a whole to supervene on its parts means that for two wholes, *x* and *y*, if *x* and *y* are identical, then the properties of the parts of *x* (say Px) must be indiscernible from the properties of the parts of *y* (Py). For *x* and *y* to differ necessarily means there is a difference between Px and Py. Applying the principle of indiscernibility to the properties of parts and wholes therefore assumes the set theoretical idea of a whole, or the bundle theory of a whole, where wholes are the mereological sum of their parts, the parts determining and defining the whole without reduction of the one to the other. A change in parts necessarily entails a change in the whole, and the whole would not exist without its parts.

Supervenience violates the principle held by Śāntarakṣita that there are only two possible types of relationship between entities: identity and causation. In supervenience, wholes are not identical with their parts in the sense of being reducible to them, and they are not caused by their parts. So what *is* the nature of the relationship between subvenient and

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[93]See *The Ontological and Moral Status of Social Groups* by Paul Sheehy, Ph.D. thesis submitted to King's College, University of London, 2000. Unpublished.

supervenient? It is explained in a variety of ways. For emergentists, higher-level properties (e.g. mental properties) 'emerge' if and only if an appropriate set of basal (e.g. physical) conditions are present. In Buddhist terminology, this could be translated as saying that the basal properties are the conditions *(pratyaya; rkyen)* rather than the causes *(hetu; rgyu)* for the arising of higher-level properties. For reductionists using a nomological model and espousing strong supervenience, where supervenience holds for individuals across worlds, there must be a system of type-type correlations between the subvenient and the supervenient, for example between mental kinds and physical-neural kinds, entailing what are called 'bridge laws'. So, for example, bridge laws might account for the way a particular neural pattern correlates with a particular mental state. But it is not clear why such bridge laws would not count as laws of causality. The problem is that the theory of supervenience does not entail a clear definition of what is meant by dependence. Its success in describing a relationship between two entities that is other than identity or causation is inconclusive. It can be argued that the third alternative it attempts to present assumes a metaphysical bias towards the primacy of the subvenient which is unjustified.

V.8.3 Śāntarakṣita's view of wholes and parts

Śāntarakṣita does not engage in the debate on wholes and parts in this type of way. What he does do is much more radical. He shows the impossibility of making logical sense of the whole-part relationship. He dismantles his opponents' concepts of what a whole is, and dismisses his opponents' ideas of what a part is. If parts do not truly exist, then wholes with parts cannot truly exist; and if unitary wholes do not truly exist either, then it does not make sense to speak of either wholes or of parts at all. It is therefore absurd to speculate on how wholes might be related to parts, or vice versa.

Discussions amongst contemporary philosophers invariably assume that *something* must (truly) exist, so their arguments are geared to determining which element(s) of the puzzle exist(s), and how. Can wholes exist independently of their parts or not? Do parts exist independently of their organisation into wholes or not? Do parts have primacy over wholes, or vice versa? And so on. These are some of the questions they address. Śāntarakṣita shows that the notions involved here do not withstand rational analysis. And *his* assumption is that if things lack logical validity they lack validity *tout court.* The internal incoherence of a proposition entails its lack of truth in reality.

This stance may undercut the metaphysical debate on wholes and parts, but it leaves an area of uncertainty. Śāntarakṣita refutes the *true* existence of wholes and parts, that is, their ontologically independent existence, but not their empirical existence in the conventional world. He does not deny that persons and phenomena, wholes and parts, can be perceived and experienced in the empirical world. He argues that they *only* exist in relative truth and not ultimately on the grounds that no relationship between wholes and parts can be established. Mereologists might wish to argue that it is the conventional world they are trying to explain, and in not explaining the conventional world Śāntarakṣita is avoiding the issue. In his defence, though, Śāntarakṣita would surely reply that—as we noted at the beginning of this Chapter—he uses the 'neither one nor many' argument exclusively to determine the ultimate truth of things, not to account for relative truth. Ultimate truth and relative truth must be approached separately and cannot be mixed in the same discourse. In fact, he might accuse mereologists of doing just that, since although they are ostensibly accounting for the conventional world, in the process they posit ontological reals (attributes, substrata, substances, and so on) thus going beyond the boundary of the relative into the ultimate. So Śāntarakṣita's position depends heavily on whether we accept the Buddhist distinction between relative and ultimate truth, a distinction that is foreign to Western philosophy. The issue is addressed in Chapter IX.

CHAPTER SIX GOD, CESSATION, PERSONS AND UNIVERSALS

VI.1 What does Śāntarakṣita refute?

In Chapter III.2 a summary was given of the main questions Śāntarakṣita discusses in the MAL. Unlike the TS, this work does not expound and debate a comprehensive selection of topics as discussed specifically by the various *darśana*-s in India, so we need to turn to the commentaries in order to identify which particular views Śāntarakṣita aims to refute on each point. In addition, we will also refer to relevant passages of the TS itself, in which Śāntarakṣita has set out his argument on given topics in more detail. Indeed, the MAL has to be read hand-in-hand with the TS if we are fully to comprehend the refutations it makes, not least because the TS was written before the MAL, and the MAL in a sense assumes the philosophical work accomplished by the TS as a basis for its own arguments. So, following the summary of questions given above, and also following the headings given in Mi pham's outline *(sa bcad)*, we will now examine the MAL in detail so as to establish and document the various views with which Śāntarakṣita took issue. We will then be in a position to evaluate his own view on each point in turn, and to draw out the philosophical implications.

VI.2 Examination of pervasive entities with a unitary nature

VI.2.1 Refuting the existence of permanent unitary *dharma*-s asserted by non-Buddhists: the notion of a Creator-God

Śāntarakṣita begins his reasoning in support of the assertion made in verse 1 by refuting the true existence of unitary entities. These are classified into two categories: pervasive

(khyab pa) and non-pervasive *(ma khyab pa).*[1] First Śāntarakṣita considers pervasive entities, addressing the issues of 1) permanent entities asserted by non-Buddhists, 2) permanent entities asserted by other Buddhist schools, 3) the existence of the person *(pudgala, gang zag)* as asserted by certain Buddhists, and 4) general pervasive entities.

It is significant that the MAL starts by refuting the existence of permanent entities because the establishment of radical *im*permanence is the cornerstone of Buddhist philosophy. In his Introduction to the TS, Śāntarakṣita pays homage to the Buddha as the teacher who taught the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda*, the principle of dependent arising; in this he is following the example of Nāgārjuna's homage in the MMK.[2] And, as Murti (1960:7) has explained, the entire Madhyamaka system is a re-interpretation of this principle which is seen not in terms of temporal causal sequence, as it is in the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika schools, but rather in terms of the mutual dependence of things, that is, the unreality of all the separate elements *(dharmanairātmya)* that come together when things arise. It should therefore come as no surprise that the opening argument in verse 2 of the MAL concerns the principle of causation.

Śāntarakṣita devotes Chapter VIII[3] of the TS to a refutation of permanent entities, and in his commentary on it Kamalaśīla (TSP 350) points out that this refutation is the simplest and most efficient method for refuting all the various entities postulated by non-Buddhists in their totality. Instead of considering them one by one (as is done in Chapters I-VII of

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[1]Mi pham explains that he chose to make this distinction following Tsong kha pa's *dka' grel, the Commentary on Difficult Points,* where self, space and so on are classified as pervasives, and all impermanent conditioned entities are termed non-pervasives.

[2]"I pay homage to the Perfect Buddha, the supreme teacher who taught [the doctrine of] dependent arising *(pratītyasamutpāda)*, the blissful cessation of conceptual construction." *yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ prapañcopasamaṃ śivaṃ/ deśayāmāsa saṃbuddhasataṃ vande vadatāṃ varaṃ//*

[3]Murti summarises the arguments presented in this chapter in *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, pp.70-73.

the TS) this refutation defeats them all at a stroke. No doubt there is both a soteriological justification for beginning with each subcategory separately, and an advantage from the point of view of dialectical debate, but nevertheless any refutation which successfully attacks topics by demolishing the coherence of their common generic category has to be more efficient. For this reason, the refutation of permanence is hailed in TSP 351[4] as the culmination of the first seven chapters of the TS. Interestingly, the MAL begins with this very same point, and generally we will find that the structure of the MAL often parallels that of the TS.

> **Since effects are produced in succession, permanent [causes] cannot have a unitary nature. If effects [arise] at different points in time this contradicts the permanence of [the cause].**
>
> *'bras bu rim can nyer sbyor bas// rtag rnams gcig pu'i bdag nyid min//*
> *'bras bu re re tha dad na// de dag rtag las nyams par 'gyur//*

In verse 2, Śāntarakṣita is concerned with the general issue of refuting any claim that a permanent cause can produce successive effects. The context and the commentaries indicate that he is willing to apply this general principle to the idea of an unconditioned, permanent cause exemplified by non-Buddhist notions of *īśvara*, or a Creator God.[5]

Mi pham explains that the argument is presented in two stages.[6] The first half of the

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[4]āha—sarvam evetyādi/ yadi sarvam abhīṣṭaṃ syāt tadā pratiniyataḥ śabdārtho na prāpnoti tataśca yā kasya-cid arthaparihāreṇa śrotuḥ kvacid arthe sabdāt pravṛttiḥ sā na prāpnoti/ tasmāt sarvam abhīṣṭaṃ ity etad ayutkaṃ/

[5]Roger Jackson (1985:340) identifies the major differences between Indian concepts such as *Iśvara*, *brahman* and *puruṣa*, and the Christian concept of God. There are characteristics in common—permanence, omniscience, independence, creatorship, compassion—but some significant differences too. The Christian God does not transform himself into the world like the *brahman* of most Vedāntin schools, rather he creates it *ex nihilo* and remains transcendent to it. The *paramapuruṣa* of the Yoga school neither creates the world nor orders it, nor relates to it in any way, whereas the Christian God does all three. In the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, *īśvara* does not create the eternal categories *(padārthas)* of existence but he does arrange the order of the cosmos. So although due caution must be exercised in using the term 'God' in the context of the MAL we shall nevertheless employ it here since the chief philosophical purpose of verse 2 is a refutation of theism, understood as any theory that attributes the creation and/or ordering of the universe to one source, be it personal or impersonal.

[6]tshigs bcad kyi phyed snga mas rtag par 'dod pa la gcig bden bkag/ phyed phyi mas gcig min pa la rtag pa bkag pa yin no/ C p.146.

stanza refutes the unitary nature of any truly existing cause, while the second half dismisses the possibility of anything that is not unitary being permanent. He summarises the argument as follows. If it is accepted that results occur gradually or in succession *(rim can)* then their cause cannot be unitary. If it were, then it would be capable of producing all results at any time. Since we can observe that this is not the case, and that things come into being at different times rather than all at once,[7] we have to conclude that their cause is not unitary, either because it is not actually capable of producing all results at any given time—implying that the cause is therefore subject to change, being efficient in one moment and not efficient in another—or that it is dependent on impermanent contributory causal factors to effectively produce results, entailing the *modification* of the cause by the contributory factors. This is inconsistent, because conditions cannot function to change the permanent. Mi pham's conclusion here rests on the premise that anything of which two or more opposed characteristics are predicated cannot be unitary: one cannot say of the same entity that it is both efficient and non-efficient in relation to a particular effect.

There are two distinct questions here which demand separate treatment. The first concerns the issue of whether causal action is possible in the case of permanent entities; and specifically, whether it is coherent to assert that a permanent God can act in time. This is central to Western theologians and philosophers too, for whom it is usually expressed as "Can God act? And if so, then in what way?" And the second question concerns the relationship between unitariness and permanence, involving critical definitions of both terms.

The second question needs to be addressed first since the terms have to be defined before

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[7]In TS and TSP 413, the point is made that both Buddhists and non-Buddhists agree, on the strength of empirical evidence, that effects are not simultaneous but successive. There being no dispute on this, Śāntarakṣita is able to open his argument with this point without any further justification.

either is considered in relation to action. Indeed, whether or not permanent entities are of a unitary nature is crucial to their ability or inability to act. However, for ease of exposition we will adopt Mi pham's order here by first outlining the basic argument, and then exploring the assumptions behind the argument, including the definitions used, in order to evaluate it critically.

Now, as we said earlier, Śāntarakṣita is maintaining that the idea of permanent entities is not coherent with that of successive causal actions. And specifically, if God is to act in a temporal universe, then God himself must be temporal.[8] Some Indian *darśana*-s did, however, claim this was possible, in so far as they asserted that a permanent cause was indeed reliant on conditional factors for production, and they are Śāntarakṣita's opponents in this case. The permanent principle of *prakṛti* in Sāṃkhya functions in such a way, since it evolves under the influence of *puruṣa* to create the world.[9] Similarly, the *puruṣa* in Vedānta creates the world from its own essence, and is both its efficient and material cause.[10] And in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the principle is applied twice: the *ātman* is eternal yet it gives rise to consciousness when acted upon by sense objects; though eternal, it is described as an agent and an enjoyer.[11] And additionally, the lord Īśvara is considered to create the world from the elements.[12]

In considering the opponents' views, Mi pham asks whether the permanent entity remains the same, with and without its association to the conditional factors; if not, it is not per-

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[8]This argument has been made by various Western thinkers in relation to the Judaeo-Christian God. See, for example, *God and Timelessness* by Nelson Pike, Schocken, New York, 1970.
[9]Radhakrishnan (1923:I.267).
[10]Nakamura (1983:240).
[11]TS 175; Mookerjee (1935:140).
[12]TS 46; Nakamura (1983:240).

manent. And if it does remain identical, then the very same conditional factors must be present and associated with it all the time. But this possibility is not acceptable since it entails continual production of all effects, which we can observe empirically is not the case. So this argument apparently refutes the possibility that a permanent cause operates in association with conditional factors. But its validity depends on whether or not we can accept the Buddhist contention that no independently existing entity can ever be connected or in association with anything else, because that very association would render it dependent; in other words, any association necessarily entails a modification of the principal entity. And furthermore, it is based on the Buddhist assumption (which is not necessarily shared by opponents) that all action occurs in time, and as a result of the presence of appropriate conditioning factors. That is to say, for instance, that the idea of spontaneous action is ruled out.[13] It would follow, of course, that proponents of the spontaneity of divine action would have to remain agnostic when faced with the question as to why God chose to act today rather than yesterday.[14]

Neither Mi pham nor Śāntarakṣita's TS[15] appear to have anticipated the concerns expressed by Aquinas about the legitimacy of using univocal language about God.[16] Univocal language uses words in broadly the same sense in different situations. For example,

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[13]By spontaneous here we mean an action that cannot be rationally explained or accounted for, which notion is at least feasible with regard to God.

[14]There are other views of causality that are not considered here: the Sāṃkhya view of *satkāryavāda*, which holds that the effect exists as a potential in the cause; and the emanation model propounded by early Christian theologians, in which the creation is seen as an overflowing of the creative energy of God and an expression of his nature such that it does not require a conscious decision to create. The image used is that of the sun and the light of the sun. See *Christian Theology: An Introduction* by Alister E. McGrath, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, p.272.

[15]TS 85 is particularly striking in this regard. Śāntarakṣita argues that it is incoherent to assert that God 'teaches' a doctrine to human beings, since he is not possessed of a mouth or, indeed, a body.

[16]*Summa Theologica*, 1.13.5 in *Philosophy of Religion: a guide and anthology*, ed. Brian Davis, OUP, 2000, pp.156-167. "...words for bodies can only apply to an incorporeal God metaphorically...all the words we are considering carry with them features characteristic of bodies: tense, for example, or concreteness, or other bodily conditions. So all these words apply to God metaphorically." Also see Vardy (1995:38-44).

I can say that my husband loves me, and that my niece loves me, where 'love' is being used in the same sense in both cases even though their love may differ. Aquinas argued that univocal language cannot be applied to God. If I then say "God loves me", the meaning of 'love' must be different because God is timeless and spaceless unlike human beings. If language is to be meaningful then univocal language is not an option when talking about God. Instead, Aquinas advocated what is technically termed 'analogical language', where there is some connection between the way words are used in different situations, but where their meanings are not identical. So if we say "Catherine is good" and "God is good", we are saying that Catherine is good in whatever way is appropriate for a person to be good, and God is good in whatever way it is appropriate for God to be good.[17] The only difficulty with analogical language about God is that we do not understand precisely what it means to say that "God is good". For Aquinas, who was a realist with respect to God's existence, we can know that God exists but we cannot know what God is.

The problems that Śāntarakṣita has refuted only occur when language about the divine is used univocally and, in this case, the concept of action or activity is applied to God with the same meaning and connotations as it is to human beings. But this is unacceptable; God is not an individual, does not have a gender, does not have a physical body like us, and cannot act in the sense that we do. However, if we speak of divine action analogically —whether in relation to the Judaeo-Christian God or to the equivalent notions in Indian religions— it *is* possible that God could act in a timeless way. If words cannot adequately convey a full understanding of either the subject or predicate of the proposition 'God acts' then it cannot be contradictory.

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[17]Vardy (1995:42).

Next, Mi pham considers the objection that permanence is not necessarily incompatible with change. The idea here is that a unitary whole may vary in time without losing its identity, just as ordinary people will say that a dancer who dons a variety of costumes is still the same person in the afternoon as he was in the morning. This broaches the issue of continuity, which had already been debated so extensively in Buddhist literature that no doubt for this reason Mi pham refutes it in just one phrase: "Whatever is not unitary and partless cannot reasonably be held to be permanent".[18] Significantly, he adds that continuity is not being refuted as an imputation but only insofar as it is asserted to be truly existent. If results arise in succession, then, the cause must exist in different ways at different points in time to account for the variety of results, and this means that it is subject to change *(pratītyasamutpāda; rten 'byung)* and that its continuity is merely imputed *(prajñāptisat; btags yod)*. The consequence of this for the MAL is that when we take any cause to be unitary, this unitariness is only inferred on our part; and since this inference does not withstand analysis, it cannot be deemed valid. Here again, it is appropriate to note the distinction made by Mi pham between refuting the existence of God as *prajñāptisat* or *btags pa*, and refuting God's existence as *satyasat* or *bden par yod pa* (he uses the term *don du*); Śāntarakṣita is concerned only with the latter.

Ichigō's outline indicates that Śāntarakṣita specifically refutes the Vaiśeṣika view in this verse, rather than non-Buddhist views in general, although neither the auto-commentary nor Kamalaśīla's MALP explicitly say this. Mi pham's commentary does not mention this either. However, the relevant passages in the TS and TSP[19] do explicitly refer to the Vaiśeṣika opponent Uddyotakara, and also to the characteristic Vaiśeṣika doctrine of

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[18]gcig pu cha med pa min phan chad rtag pa mi 'thad pas.../ C. p.146.
[19]For example, TS and TSP 370-384.

inherence *(samavāya).*[20] Furthermore, Śāntarakṣita's refutation of theism in chapter II of the TS is based on that previously made by Dharmakīrti[21], who explicitly attacked the views of Uddyotakara. More significantly, perhaps, from a philosophical standpoint, the TS asserts in verse 352 that Nyāya followers do not regard anything at all as momentary, and rather than categorizing entities in terms of permanence and impermanence, they distinguish them as created and uncreated. The Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools had merged well before Śāntarakṣita, so it seems legitimate to consider verse 2 of the MAL as a refutation of the Vaiśeṣika view.

On the face of it, this refutation may not seem very convincing to the modern reader. In order to evaluate it, we need to look at its philosophical premises[22] as well as the arguments actually used by the opponents. Śāntarakṣita's assumptions can be identified from the arguments put forward in Chapter VIII of the TS. First, we will consider his definition of permanence and unitariness.

Unlike Nyāya scholars who classify phenomena into created and uncreated, and unlike the Vātsīputrīyas who classify them into permanent *(nitya, rtag pa)* and impermanent *(anitya, mi rtag pa),*[23] most Buddhists distinguish between conditioned phenomena *(saṃskṛta-dharma, 'dus byas kyi chos)* and unconditioned phenomena *(asaṃskṛta-dharma, 'dus ma byas kyi chos)*. Bhāvaviveka[24] defines the difference in terms of causality: the

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[20]TS 418.
[21]In the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika.* See also "Dharmakīrti's refutation of theism" by Roger Jackson, PEW 36:4, pp.315-348, 1985.
[22]In fact these same principles will be found to underpin several more of the arguments used by Śāntarakṣita later in the text.
[23]TS 352.
[24]zhes bya ba la 'dus byas kyi chos ni rgyu dang rkyen gyis bskyed pa rnams so// 'dus ma byas kyi chos ni skye ba dang gnas pa dang 'jig pa dang bral ba rnams so// That is, conditioned phenomena arise from [the coming together of] causes and conditions. Unconditioned phenomena are free of arising, continuation and destruction. TJV 23c-d, Tibetan text in Iida (1969:97).

former are involved in the causal process while the latter are not.[25] In the Buddhist framework, then, non-conditionality is primary and permanence is secondary, in the sense that the characteristic of permanence is generally considered to be a possible logical consequence of non-conditionality, so the latter has to be established first. This means that by definition, permanence is associated with a lack of involvement in the causal process, but the corollary does not apply. To illustrate that non-conditionality is not *necessarily* associated with permanence in Madhyamaka, we can refer to the sixteen kinds of emptiness summarised by Candrakīrti in MAV 6:181-218. The eighth kind is termed 'the emptiness of the unconditioned' (verse 192) and Mi pham comments on this as follows:

> *Phenomena which in the beginning have no arising, in the middle have no continuation and at the end have no cessation, are [called] unconditioned. The fact that they are 'empty of themselves'* (de yis stong nyid) *is called 'emptiness of the unconditioned'* ('dus ma byas stong nyid). *This is designed to avert any clinging to emptiness [as evidenced by] the belief of the Vaibhāṣikas and other Śrāvakas that* nirvāṇa *as cessation really exists, and the belief that the unconditioned is permanent.*[26]

The Vaibhāṣika view alluded to here will be examined in the next section.

Now the explanation I have given above was controversial in Tibet, where different definitions were advanced by dGe lugs pa thinkers.[27] They did not consider that the category of permanent phenomena was concomitant with the category of non-existing phenomena, and held that some permanent phenomena (but not a Creator God) exist. Their view is tenable because they define 'permanent' not as 'eternal' but as 'non-momentary' *(akṣaṇika dharma; skad cig ma ma yin pa'i chos)*. They consider, for example, that if

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[25]This definition is a basic Abhidharma one, and not exclusive to Madhyamaka. Vasubandhu expresses this view in AK II.55c-d. "Conditioned things...are results. The unconditioned has neither cause nor result."
[26]chos gang la thog mar skye bar du bnas tha mar mi rtag gsum po nyid/ de dag med pa 'dus ma byas yin la 'dus ma byas de ni de yis stong nyid gang yin pa de ni 'dus ma byas stong nyid do/ stong nyid la zhen pa dang/ bye smra sogs nyan thos pa myang 'das 'gog pa rdzas grub dang/ 'dus ma byas la rtag rdzin bzlog go/ Mi pham's commentary on verse 192 of the MAV.
[27] See the discussion in Klein (1998:46ff.)

a phenomenon such as the emptiness of a table does not disintegrate from moment to moment, it is permanent.[28] However, it is not eternal, since it will disintegrate when the table ceases to exist. dGe lugs pa scholars further accord both wholes and parts an equal ontological status and unlike Abhidharma masters they assert that wholes such as tables and chairs exist and function, and are not merely imputed by thought *(prajñaptisat; btags yod)*.[29] It follows that they claim that entities endowed with parts exist and function.

The dGe lugs pa view is based on that school's unique interpretation of Dharmakīrti, for example of the following passage in which Dharmakīrti defines objects of perception.

> *Its (i.e. perception's) object is only the specifically characterized. The specifically characterized is the [kind of object] whose nearness or remoteness [creates] a difference in the appearance to the cognition. That alone ultimately exists because it performs a function, the defining property of things.*[30]

The debate centres around the interpretation of what is meant by "ultimately" in the phrase "what ultimately exists" *(don dam par yod pa)*. According to the dGe lugs pa presentation of Sautrāntika perception is non-mistaken, and since composite objects such as tables and chairs appear to perception then such objects must exist in reality. Wholes are therefore understood as entities that perform a function in that they induce perception, and they must be accepted as ultimate since that perception is non-mistaken. It follows that composite wholes exist and function *ultimately*, and are not merely imputed by thought *(prajñaptisat, btags yod)*.

Neither Sa skya nor rNying ma scholars follow this interpretation. They follow Vasubandhu, and assert that wholes appear to perception conventionally but not ultimately,

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[28]dGe lugs pas accept both emptiness and absence as phenomena. See note 35 below.
[29]See Klein (1998:49ff; 84ff).
[30]de'i yul ni rang gi mtshan nyid de/ don gang nye ba dang mi nye dag las shes pa la snang ba tha dad pa de ni rang mtshan nyid do/ de nyid don dam par yod pa ste dngos po'i mtshan nyid ni don byed nus pa kho na yin pa'i phyir ro/ Dharmakīrti, *Drop of Reasoning (Nyaya bindu prakaraṇa)*, P.5711,329.b.7-8. Cited and discussed in Dreyfus (1997:68-9) and Klein (1998:72).

and that what is meant by the phenomena that appear "ultimately" are partless particles and indivisible moments of consciousness. Wholes are therefore imputed to thought, and only these ultimate existents are not.[31]

A critical evaluation of dGe lugs pa theories is outside of the scope of this study. Our purpose here is rather to acknowledge the intellectual context in which Śāntarakṣita's own views are to be appreciated today. Although Mi pham was aware of these debates he did not engage in them at this point of his commentary, but the simplicity of his one-line refutation "Whatever is not unitary and partless cannot reasonably be held to be permanent" itself indicates his rejection of the dGe lugs pa view.

The next principle we will consider follows directly from this: existence defined in terms of functionality. Following Dharmakīrti's lead, Śāntarakṣita (TS 416) writes:"The only [i.e. defining] characteristic of an existing entity is that it should have the capacity for effective action."[32] Interestingly, he omits the qualification "ultimately". According to this definition, then, Śāntarakṣita (TS 392-4) claims that whatever exists must be momentary, with the corollary that anything permanent must be non-existent.[33] These arguments correspond to the second half of verse 2 of the MAL.

This point is clarified later at TS 470 when Śāntarakṣita asserts that momentariness does not apply to universals because universals have no function and are therefore non-

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[31]See Klein and Dreyfus, op.cit.

[32]TS 416. asanto'kṣaṇikāḥ sarve śaktir yad vastulakṣaṇam/ A similar definition is found in MAL 64 where Śāntarakṣita characterizes the relative. See Chapter IX.2.1-2 below.

[33]Similarly, Āryadeva argues that anything that is causeless is non-existent. "There is no functional thing without a cause, Nor anything permanent which has a cause. Thus the one who knows suchness said what has come about causelessly does not exist." *Catuḥśataka* verse 203, transl. Ruth Sonam (1994). Tibetan text at www.asianclassics.org/texts/tengyur/TD3846M.ACT@10A, verse 204: rgyu med par ni dngos po med// rgyu ldan rtag pa yod min pa// des na rgyu med las grub ni// de nyid mkhyen pas grub min gsungs//

existent. Similarly, Mi pham[34] points out that the MAL does not refute unconditioned permanent entities as imputations, only as truly existing entities; and that it is on account of their not being truly existent that such entities cannot be permanent.[35] In other words, the *idea* of God is not being refuted, only his or her objective existence.[36] However, despite Mi pham's point, the first two lines of verse 2 of the MAL do imply that even if the idea of God is not refuted as such, the concept of a *Creator* God *is* considered to be illogical. That is, causal activity is seen to be incompatible with permanence and oneness.

Thirdly, there is the principle that for Buddhists, there is no alternative to existence and non-existence[37] with respect to unconditioned entities; either they exist or they do not exist, there is no third possibility between these two. It is for this reason that the notion of latent potential is not accepted in this context. This also explains why Indian Buddhists refute the existence of non-existence, in other words, they refute the Vaiśeṣika view that destruction *(pradhvamsa)* is itself an entity that acts as an external cause for the cessation of the existence of another entity.[38] Śāntarakṣita (TS 379 and 439-440) argues that when Buddhists refer to the annihilation of an entity, they are using a non-affirming negative *(prasajyapratiṣedha, med dgag)*; they are simply saying "it's not there" but not suggesting that anything else, such as the *absence* of that entity, exists in its place.

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[34]btags pa'i gcig tsam ni 'dir dgag pa ma yin la/ de don du med pas rtag par bzhag tu'ang med do/ Unitariness is not refuted here as a mere imputation, [but] since [unitary entities] are ultimately non-existent they should not be posited *(bzhag)* as permanent. C p.146.

[35]Two different definitions are operating here. According to the opponent, whatever is truly existent is permanent. According to Śāntarakṣita, whatever is permanent is non-existent.

[36]This argument is obviously at odds with Anselm's ontological argument, in which he asserts that the very idea of God entails that He must exist in reality.

[37]This point is made by Uddyotakara when he characterizes the Buddhist view. TSP 370-372 quotes *Nyāyavārttika* 3.2.14 on this.

[38]Tibetan Buddhists differed in their interpretation of how the disintegration of conditioned entities comes about. For Sa skya Paṇḍita, for example, destruction or disintegration is a nonthing, and it therefore does not require a specific cause. In other words, the very impermanent, conditioned nature of an entity is sufficient to entail its disintegration without the requirement of a specific cause. By contrast, for dGe lugs pa thinkers, the absence of a thing is considered positively as capable of being apprehended, and it is logically coherent then to infer that it requires a specific cause. See Dreyfus (1998:64ff.; 244ff.).

Finally, it is considered that causality requires a cause to be of the same nature as its effect. Like must produce like; an elephant cannot give birth to a kangaroo; otherwise anything could produce anything, and this would mean chaos.[39] This principle could be seen as the main one underlying Śāntarakṣita's argument: that if a cause has the nature of permanence it cannot logically produce effects that are sequential and momentary because then their natures would be contradictory. Similarly, if a cause has a unitary nature, it can not logically produce effects that are multiple because their natures would be contradictory. Logically, a truly existent one cannot produce truly existent many.

Once again, the coherence of this argument may not be apparent if one follows the dGe lugs pa view outlined above, since in that system causal efficacy can be applied to wholes. It might follow, then, that a potter could be considered to be the cause of a pot when the potter and the pot do not share the same characteristic natures. However, the coherence of Śāntarakṣita's argument rests on the understanding that he does not interpret Dharmakīrti like the dGe lugs pas but follows the thinking presented in Vasubandhu's AK where the idea of a characteristic nature is applied only to *dharma*-s.

How well has Śāntarakṣita understood his opponents' arguments, and how successful is his refutation of them? Of all the Indian *darśana*-s it was the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school that

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[39]In MAV 6:14, Candrakīrti refutes 'production from other' on this basis: that a causal process based on cause and effect being 'different' or 'other' implies chaos. gzhan la brten nas gal te gshan shig 'byung bar ' gyur na ni// 'o na me lce las kyang mun pa 'thug por 'byung 'gyur shing// thams cad las kyang thams cad skye bar 'gyur te gang gi phyir// skyed par byed pa ma yin na lus la yang gshan nyid mtshungs//
The same principle is expressed in Āryadeva's CS IX:211. "How can that produced by a permanent thing be impermanent? Never are the two, cause and effect, seen to have incongruent characteristics." In Ruth Sonam (1994:208). Tibetan text at www.asianclassics.org/texts/tengyur/TD3846M.ACṬ verse 212: dngos po rtag pa las skyes pa// ci lta bur na mi rtag 'gyur// rnam yang rgyu dang 'bras bu gnyis// mtshan nyid mi mthun mthong ma yin//
In fact, this principle was accepted by Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike; see for example, *Nyāya sūtras* IV.I.9 in Vidyābhuṣana (1975:109).

made a serious attempt to defend theism with logical proofs.[40] The classic Nyāya statement on God as primary cause is found in *Nyāya sūtras* IV.I. verses 19-21.[41]

> *It is considered that Īśvara is the [sole] cause [of fruits], because man's actions are [occasionally found] not to bear fruit. [Some object that this is not so] because in the absence of human action there is no production of fruits. [Since fruits are awarded by God], [we] consider that [man's] actions are not the sole cause thereof.*

Vātsyāyana's commentary interprets this passage as saying that *īśvara* is the cause of all effects.[42] He defines *īśvara* as being free of misapprehension, carelessness and so on, and endowed with merit, knowledge and the power of concentration. It is his merit that produces merit and demerit in each person, and it is he who sets the elements in action. That is to say, he represents the principle that makes it possible for human action to bear results entailing that he is the principle underlying the very existence or possibility of causal relations. Furthermore, he is the prime mover of the universe. However, there is no reference at all to *īśvara* as creator of the universe. Vātsyāyana goes on to define *īśvara* as belonging to the category *(padārtha)* of substance *(dravya)*, in which it is a special instance of self *(ātman)*, in control of both *karman* and the material elements.

Uddyotakara, who probably flourished in the period between Dignāga and Dharmakīrti (i.e. late 6th or early 7th century) during which the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools merged, clarified the argument further. He asserted that *īśvara* is the instrumental cause *(nimitta-kāraṇa)* of things because he enables beings to reap the fruits of their actions. Moreover,

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[40]See Jackson, op.cit., p.318. It should be noted here that since Śāntarakṣita is concerned with the question of God's action in the world, he effectively refutes theism and not deism, where God is distant from and uninvolved in his Creation.

[41][19] Īśvaraḥ kāranaṃ puruṣakarmmāphalyadarśanāt [20] na puruṣakarmmābhāve phalānişpatteḥ [21] tatkāritatvādahetuḥ *The Nyāya Sūtras of Gotama*, transl. and ed. Mahāmahopādhyāya Satiśa Chandra Vidhyābhuṣana, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1975, p.112. The Sanskrit text, translation and commentary are taken from this edition.

[42]Dated to around 450 C.E. This is considered by Chandra Vidyābhuṣana (1913) to be the greatest commentary on the *Nyāya sūtras*.

he is a necessary adjunct to material results because *all* results must be preceded by *conscious* action. Further, although *īśvara* is permanent, he can cause impermanent entities because we can observe that spun yarn, though unmoving, is the cause of a movable garment.[43] *Īśvara* does not create the eternal atoms that make up the material world, but he arranges pre-existent material in an order that underpins the moral consequences of actions. Finally, the power and consciousness of *īśvara* are eternal, omnipresent and unlimited.[44]

We will now attempt to summarise the Vaiśeṣika view by considering its ontology in more depth. As we saw above, there are significant differences in the meaning ascribed to 'existence' or 'being' by Buddhists and Vaiśeṣikas. The classic reference on this is the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* which defines *bhāva* as a universal,[45] and *sattā* as the application of this universal principle to substances, qualities and motions (but not the other categories of reality)[46] while being different from them *(arthāntara)*.[47] Vaiśeṣikas therefore accept *bhāva* as a supreme over-arching universal which lies over and above the entities in which it occurs. The permanence of the universal reality of existence *(bhāva)* contrasts with the impermanence of its instantiation in specific particulars *(sattā)*[48] although Halbfass (1992:140) notes that these terms are sometimes used interchangeably and therefore

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[43]This argument is curious and inconclusive, since garments do not move by themselves and there does not appear to be a significant difference between the way persons can cause spun yarn to move and the way they can cause garments to move.

[44]*Nyāyavārttika* IV, 1, 19-21. See also *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*: Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika up to Gaṅgeśa, ed. Karl H. Potter, Princeton University Press, 1977, pp.331-333; and Jackson (1985).

[45]*Vaiśeṣikasūtra*, I. 2: bhāvaḥ sāmānyam eva. See also *On Being and What There Is: Classical Vaiśeṣika and the History of Indian Ontology* by Wilhelm Halbfass, SUNY, 1992 for an in-depth analysis of the topic.

[46]The categories of reality posited by the Vaiśeṣika school are: substance *(dravya)*, quality *(guṇa)*, concept *(sāmānya)*, particularity *(viśeṣa)*, and inherence *(samavāya)*. Motion or action is called *karma*. "The three common qualities of *dravya, guṇa* and *karma* are that they are existent, non-eternal, substantive, effect, cause, and possess generality and particularity." Dasgupta (1922, 1988:I.285-6).

[47]sad iti yato dravyaguṇakarmasu dravyaguṇakarmabhyo 'rthāntaṃ sattā/ VS I.2, 7-8. Halbfass (1992:140).

[48]Halbfass (1992: n.7, p.160).

ambiguously. Praśastapāda, who lived between Nāgārjuna and Dignāga, refined the ideas in the *sūtra* and developed ideas of his own, in particular the notion of factuality, objective existence or is-ness *(astitva)* which he applied to substances, qualities, motions, universals, particularities and inherence. This is characterized as not being necessarily coextensive with knowability *(jñeyatva)* or nameability *(abhidheyatva)*. Consequently, he distinguishes two different relations to being: some entities, specifically those categorized as universals, particularities and inherence, are 'intrinsically real' *(svātmasattva)* while others (namely substances, qualities and motions) are joined temporarily with being *(sattā sambandha)*. This highlights the importance of inherence *(samavāya)* which can function as the connection between relata that are ontologically distinct, that is, between reals *(sat)* and contingent entities, between wholes and parts, or between substrates and their qualities or motions, on the analogy of the relation between container and contained.[49]

The refutation of this doctrine in the MAL is obviously extremely brief, and does not purport to be comprehensive, the TS having fulfilled that function previously. Nevertheless, we would expect it to address the doctrine fundamentally, at its root. Does it do this? Taking Dharmakīrti's refutation of Vaiśeṣika theism as our reference, we note that this falls into three main parts.[50] First, he refutes *īśvara*'s authority; second, he questions *īśvara* as a *conscious* cause of worldly effects; and third, he refutes *īśvara* as a causal agent by examining the characteristics of the causal process. In the MAL, only the third type of refutation is used. Having said that, Śāntarakṣita addresses the question of the true existence of consciousness separately, in verses 16-60, but only within an internalist

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[49]Śāntarakṣita's critique of the Vaiśeṣika doctrine is detailed in the TS in which he devotes chapters X to XV to an analysis of each of their categories *(padārtha)* in turn. In verses 571-3 he refutes their classification of reality into categories of reals on the grounds that it is based on the erroneous assumption that the structure of language reflects that of reality itself. In particular, the use of the genitive in such phrases as 'the colour of the cloth' or 'categories of existence' cannot lead to a valid conclusion regarding inherence.

[50]*Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, verses 8-9, 10-20, and 21-28. See also Jackson (1985).

model of epistemology, so as a refutation of theism it is unsatisfactory. The issue of authority, however, is not addressed here at all.

Śāntarakṣita's reasoning is not very original. The refutation of the unitary existence of an entity on the grounds that it is made of parts, either spatially or temporally, is classically found in the Abhidharma. For example, *Milindapañha* I.1 argues that a chariot does not substantially exist because it is not unitary and partless, it therefore exists merely as a designation; likewise, the person does not substantially exist because it can be reduced through analysis to a sum of different functions (I.1), and the identity of a person as a permanent entity is also mistaken because it can be seen to change and involve different temporal parts (II.1). However, the MAL differs from this presentation in so far as it refutes permanence/unitariness on the grounds that they contradict the causal process. Several Mādhyamikas before Śāntarakṣita used a similar argument. As we mentioned earlier, it reflects a characteristically Madhyamaka interpretation of *pratītyasamutpāda*, showing that causality is logically impossible if entities are held to be truly existent. Āryadeva, for instance, devoted Chapter 9 of the CS to a refutation of permanent phenomena, and Chapter 15 to his refutation of truly existent characteristics in entities involved in production. His arguments mainly centre around issues of timing (does the cause precede the effect or not?) and around ontological problems related to essence and difference (what is the definition of 'otherness'?). Candrakīrti's arguments in MAV 6:13-22 against the production of an effect from a truly existent cause that is 'other' than it, have a similar basis to Āryadeva's. The 'neither one nor many' argument used by Śāntarakṣita was used previously in a similar context by Jñānagarbha in verse 14 of the SDV, as mentioned above, so its use in the MAL is not an innovation.

In conclusion, we have seen that Śāntarakṣita's refutation of theism hinges very largely on the Buddhist definition of existence, and it could be argued that the definition itself begs the question. To define existence as functionality *(arthakriyākāritva)* and momentariness *(kṣaṇikatva)* eliminates the possibility of permanent existence from the outset. On the other hand, it is difficult to reconcile the true existence of permanence with a dynamic relationship to the impermanent, if we take permanence to refer to eternality and not to medium-term continuity. Likewise, it is not easy to fathom what it means to say that a truly existent one can have a connection *(sambandha)* with multiple contingent entities, be they established as existent or not. The Vaiśeṣika solution to these problems, developed in the theory of inherence *(samavāya)* only displaces the difficulty. By pin-pointing the issues of number and timing, Śāntarakṣita does therefore appear to have refuted the fundamental weaknesses of his opponent's position. Within the theoretical perspective of the rNying ma school his refutation is coherent and convincing.

But from a broader perspective, his refutation of theism raises other more fundamental philosophical questions. We might attack it, in particular, on the grounds that it is philosophically inconclusive. The antagonism between Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Buddhist views on theism can be seen to rest not so much on the validity or invalidity of the rational arguments involved, but rather on the *pre*-philosophical premises underlying those arguments.[51] Both Buddhist and non-Buddhist *darśana*-s attempted to discover an immutable state that was free of the vicissitudes of *saṃsāra*, and yet in their attempts to understand this state, they arrived at very different conclusions. On the basis of religious experience and logic, Hindu schools, including Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, concluded that if we are to account for the continuity of the impermanent entities of our empirical world, they must in some

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[51]See Roger Jackson's critique, op.cit., p.339.

way be subsumed by an eternal substance. Buddhists, on the other hand, concluded on the basis of *their* religious experience and logic, that there is not nor could there be any eternal substance because such a substance could not interact with the impermanent world. Hindus insist on the necessity of permanence to explain continuity, while Buddhists insist on the necessity of impermanence to explain change. These are deep-seated antithetical positions, and despite their common ground of shared logical rules, one suspects that both sides are using reasoning merely as a tool for explicating a *pre*-philosophical view. In such a case, their differences are irreconcilable.

We might be tempted at this point to dismiss all Indian thinking as pre-philosophical or even as non-philosophical, just as Anthony Flew has done.[52] But there are other ways of approaching this problem which show it to be common to both Indian and Western philosophies. Rudolf Carnap maintains that ontological questions such as 'does God exist?' are invariably posed in relation to a particular conceptual framework.[53] He defines a framework as a system of terms and expressions, together with rules governing those terms and expressions. Ontological questions can be divided into internal questions and external questions, that is, questions asked within the system and questions asked from outside the system looking in. Internal questions are philosophically trivial: to ask 'does God exist?' from within the Christian theological framework, for example, will of course yield an affirmative answer because God has already been accepted as part of the framework. To ask it from outside of the framework is quite different and, according to the deflationist theory developed by Carnap, the answer can only be a pragmatic one related to the per-

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[52]*An Introduction to Western Philosophy - ideas and argument from Plato to Popper* by Anthony Flew, Thames and Hudson, 1971, 1989 revised, p.36.
[53]'Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology' by Rudolf Carnap, in *Philosophy of Mathematics*, ed. P. Benacerraf and H. Putnam, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp.241-257.

ceived advisability of adopting the framework itself. The reason for this is that 'existence' takes its meaning from within a given framework—what we mean by the existence of prime numbers is quite different from what we mean by the existence of a vase or the existence of God—so external questions cannot yield satisfactory metaphysical answers. Now this model is applicable to our situation, insofar as Śāntarakṣita is questioning the existence of *īśvara* from outside the Hindu theistic framework. Arguably, his fundamental reason for *not* accepting the existence of *īśvara* is pragmatic and soteriological, logic alone being inconclusive. As we have seen, what he understands by 'existence' is different from the meaning ascribed to it within his opponent's framework.

The difficulty lies in the deflationist implication that frameworks and the truths they yield do not reflect reality.[54] Hindus claim that when they speak of *īśvara* they are speaking of the real, and that language *(śabda)* has a direct and powerful connection to reality. The Svātantrika school holds that *dharmic* discourse can point to the ultimate. So neither side would admit that they are merely speaking within an axiomatic framework which reveals nothing about metaphysical truth. This is the crux of the problem: their respective theories of language preclude them from recognizing that their debate has no real common ground and that the pre-philosophical experiences on which it is based are radically different.[55]

It is therefore highly significant that Śāntarakṣita's refutation is logical rather than onto-

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[54]For a discussion of this topic, see *Arguing for Atheism: an introduction to the philosophy of religion* by Robin Le Poidevin, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, pp.124-134.

[55]This difficulty is by no means peculiar to Indian philosophy. For example, in *God, Reason and Theistic Proofs*, pp.192-3, Stephen Davis writes: "In the end it does seem that theistic proofs are very much *optional* for theists. The fact of the matter is: I enjoy discussing theistic proofs, consider the enterprise valuable, and even consider that there do exist successful theistic proofs. Nevertheless, the reason I am a theist has almost nothing to do with theistic proofs. It has a great deal to do with experiences I have had that I interpret in terms of the presence of God...That is why I would be extremely suspicious of any apparently successful atheistic proof. That is why I claim to know that God exists."

logical. He does not attack his opponent's view with reference to any correspondence theory of truth, but rather on the grounds that it is internally and logically incoherent.[56] He does not question the Vaiśeṣika religious experience *per se*, he refutes as incoherent the way they interpret it. Śāntarakṣita's refutation should therefore be measured solely in terms of its logical coherence.

VI.2.2 The existence of permanent unitary *dharma*-s asserted by the Vaibhāṣikas

Next, Śāntarakṣita turns to the views of certain Buddhist schools, and discusses the existence of unconditioned *dharma*-s in verses 3 to 8.

> **[3] According to the [Vaibhāṣika] view, the unconditioned are objects of the cognition that arises through meditation; so the unconditioned are not [in fact] unitary entities since they are related to successively arising [moments of] cognition.**
> *bsgoms las byung ba'i shes pa yis// shes bya 'dus ma byas smra ba'i//*
> *lugs la'ang gcig min de dag ni// rim can shes dang 'brel phyir ro//*

> **[4] If the intrinsic nature of an [object] known by a former cognition continues to exist [in the object of a] later [cognition], the former cognition becomes the succeeding one, and the latter becomes the same as the former.**
> *rnam shes snga mas shes bya ba'i// rang bzhin rjes su 'brang na ni//*
> *shes pa snga ma'ang phyi mar 'gyur// phyi ma'ang de bzhin snga mar 'gyur//*

> **[5] [On the other hand], if the essence of that [object] does not occur at all previous and subsequent occasions, it should be understood that the unconditioned is a momentary occurrence, just like cognition.**
> *sngon dang phyi ma'i gnas rnams su// de yi ngo bo mi 'byung na//*
> *'dus ma byas de shes pa bzhin// skad cig 'byung bar shes par bya//*

> **[6] If it arises by the force of successive moments, the unconditioned is not [really] unconditioned, just like mind and mental states.**
> *snga ma snga ma'i skad cig gi// mthu yis 'byungs bar 'gyur ba na//*
> *'dus ma byas su 'di mi 'gyur// sems dang sems las byung ba bzhin//*

> **[7] If it is asserted that these momentary entities have arisen independently, they would remain permanently existent or non-existent, since they are not reliant on anything else.**
> *skad cig pa rnams 'di dag tu// rang dbang 'byung bar 'dod na ni//*
> *gzhan la bltos pa med pa'i phyir// rtag tu yod pa'am med par 'gyur//*

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[56]For a discussion of the relation between these different understandings of truth to the question about the existence of God, see Vardy (1995:15-23).

[8] [Finally,] since these propounded entities cannot perform any function, what is the point of investigating them? Lustful [women] may wonder whether a eunuch is handsome or not, but what purpose will their examination serve?
don byed nus pa ma yin la// de 'dod brtags pas ci zhig bya//
ma ning gzugs bzang mi bzang zhes// 'dod ldan rnams kyis brtags ci phan//

Śāntarakṣita's first point, in verse 3, is to show the self-contradictory character of the Vaibhāṣika view, according to which there are unconditioned states that are the objects of consciousness and that exist substantially *(dravya)* as *dharma*-s. This view is presented by Vasubandhu in the first and second chapters of the AK and AKB. According to the Vaibhāṣika school there are three unconditioned things, namely "space and the two types of *nirodha*".[57] In terms of those things that are "objects of the cognition that arises through meditation practice",[58] i.e. the category specifically targeted by verse 3 of the MAL,[59] we are concerned here with the two types of cessation *(nirodha)* termed *prati-saṁkhyānirodha* (the cessation of impure *dharma*-s due to knowledge) and *aprati-saṁkhyānirodha* (the cessation of impure *dharma*-s due not to knowledge but rather to the insufficiency of causes for their arising).[60] Vasubandhu explains that these are indeed considered by the Vaibhāṣikas as objects *(ālambana)* of the mind. He states that "all the *dharma*-s, conditioned as well as unconditioned, are 'objects' of consciousness of the mind and its mental states".[61] Vasubandhu also confirms[62] that unconditioned *dharma*-s are held by the Vaibhāṣikas to be real, independent, substantially existing entities (*dravya*).

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[57]AK 1:5c. Pruden, vol.1, p.59.
[58]MAL verse 3: bsgoms las byung ba'i shes pa yis/
[59]The question of space will be dealt with in verse 10 under the general unitary pervading entities.
[60]The explanation given here is based on AK and AKB 1.5c-6d, op.cit., pp.59-60.
[61]AKB 2:62c.
[62]AKB 2:55d. "This *dharma*, in its nature, is real but indescribable...it is only possible to indicate its general characteristics, by saying that there is a real entity *(dravya)*, distinct from others, which is good, and eternal, and which receives the name of *pratisaṁkhyānirodha*...". Transl. Pruden, p.280.

Now the incoherence of this view arises, argues Śāntarakṣita, from the fact that the Vaibhāṣikas assert that consciousness is a serial continuum,[63] that the apprehension of objects of knowledge occurs as a series of momentary events, and that consequently unconditioned *dharma*-s—like conditioned *dharma*-s—must exist in a series corresponding to the series of mental objects apprehended. This follows for two reasons. First, the Vaibhāṣikas asserted that perception is non-mistaken, so the way things appear to us is the way they actually are. And second, the Vaibhāṣikas believed that unconditioned *dharma*-s can be apprehended in meditation by the human mind, so they can be treated as objects of knowledge. Therefore, if they do exist in a series, then they cannot be unconditioned since by definition "unconditioned *dharma*-s are outside of time",[64] the "unconditioned lasts eternally in its own nature"[65] and is "devoid of the characteristic 'arising'".[66] Furthermore, these *dharma*-s could no longer be unitary, unconditioned entities since each moment of their existence would be distinct from every other.

Since the main thrust of Śāntarakṣita's argument is to show that unconditioned *dharma*-s cannot be unitary, it is interesting to note that this is acknowleged by the Vaibhāṣikas themselves. With respect to *pratisaṁkhyānirodha*, they admit that it does not exist as one single *dharma* because the cessation of each defilement occurs separately. Otherwise, the cessation of one defilement would automatically entail cessation of them all.

> *Is there but one single* pratisaṁkhyānirodha *from all of the impure* dharma-*s?*
> *No.*
> *Why is this?*
>
> ***[6b] Each [cessation occurs] separately.***
>
> *Each cessation taken separately is* pratisaṁkhyānirodha. *The objects of cessation*

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[63]AK and AKB 1:38b, op.cit., p.105. **"The last three *dhātu*-s are momentary.** The last three *dhātu*-s are the mental organ, the object of mental consciousness, and the mental consciousness." Unconditioned *dharma*-s are specifically objects of the mental consciousness (see AKB 1-48a, op.cit., p.129).
[64]AKB, 2:55a-b, op.cit., p.278.
[65]AKB, 2:45c-d, op.cit., p.239.
[66]AKB, 2:46c-d, op.cit., p.249.

> *are as numerous as the objects that arise. If it were otherwise, if* pratisaṁkhyā-nirodha *were single, then a person who has experienced the extinction of the defilement which is abandoned by seeing the Truth of Suffering would have obtained at the same time the extinction of the defilements which are abandoned by the Seeing of the other Truths, and by meditation. It would be useless for him to cultivate the part of the Path which is opposed to these defilements.*[67]

The argument used in the MAL, therefore, pointing to the relation between unconditioned *dharma*-s and the successively arising moments of wisdom that ascertain them, is directly related to this passage of the AK since both are based on an analysis of the nature of cognition. In so far as anything is an object of cognition it must be conditioned, which implies it is composite. The contradiction inherent in the Vaibhāṣika view hinges on the incompatibility of maintaining that unconditioned *dharma*-s substantially exist outside of time while also asserting that they are objects of the mind ascertained through meditation.

The passage from the AK and AKB quoted above illustrates that this particular argument of Śāntarakṣita's is not new. He has relied on previous sources, namely the *Abhidharma-kośa* and the *Vibhāṣā*, to make his point without adding anything new. In verses 4 and 5 Śāntarakṣita develops his argument further, exploring more contradictions related to unconditioned *dharma*-s being objects of cognition. Here, the point he makes is that if the nature of these *dharma*-s is eternal and unchanging, they would give rise to an unchanging cognition, and this is impossible since cognitions occur in a series. In other words, the *same* object would continue to exist for successive moments of cognition; what I apprehend at t_1 is entirely identical with what I apprehend at t_2, t_3 and so on. But this is nonsensical, since each moment of cognition is defined by having a distinct object and a distinct moment of apprehending consciousness, so that the continuously existing *dharma*

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[67]AK 1:6b, op.cit., p.60. The notes by Louis de la Vallée Poussin indicate that this point is based on *Vibhāṣā* TD27, p.164c16.

would be overlaid with a momentary *dharma* relating to the same phenomenon in each given moment of perception. The only solution to this situation is to say that the unconditioned *dharma* is momentary, like cognition[68], which is tantamount to saying that it is not in fact unconditioned at all.

Now this argument rests on a number of assumed principles. The first is that the nature of an unconditioned *dharma* is eternal and unchanging. What does this mean? According to the definitions given by Vasubandhu, even conditioned *dharma*-s have such natures. He explains that conditioned *dharma*-s exist in time but that, despite this, "a *dharma* does not change its nature by changing its time period".[69] To illustrate this, he uses two language-specific (and hence rather unsatisfactory) examples: milk in the udder is called 'that which has been drawn', and a heap of kindling is called 'wood to be burned'. The implication is that although a *dharma* is momentary, since it arises, lasts and decays, its 'nature' is not. As Williams (1981) explains, impermanent *dharma*-s are particular instantiations of permanent natures (*svabhāva*).

These arguments raise two concerns. What is meant by existence? And what is meant by nature? If we consider existence first, we see that the Vaibhāṣikas assert that conditioned *dharma*-s exist in past, present and future; in other words that existence *(sat)* is not only ascribed of present things, but also of past things and future things.[70] The past exists now and the future exists now. If this is the case, how do conditioned *dharma*-s differ from

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[68]MAL 5: 'dus ma byas de shes pa bzhin// skad cig 'byung bar shes par bya//

[69]AKB 1:7a-b, op.cit., p.61.

[70]In his *grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa rin po che'i phreng ba*, dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po (1728-91) characterizes the Vaibhāṣikas as follows: "(the Vaibhāṣikas propound) that the three times [past, present and future] are particulars [or instances] of substantial entities... Yesterday's pot exists today as a past pot. The past of a thing occurs after its present existence, that is, after its present existence has passed.

unconditioned *dharma*-s that exist eternally? In his notes on AK 1-48b, Louis de la Vallée Poussin explains that unconditioned things are eternal because they do not go from one time period to another. This is unconvincing. The system requires radical revision if it is to be coherent.

This was the aim of Saṃghabhadra, an important orthodox Vaibhāṣika who wrote a commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa* in response to Sautrāntika critique. In his *Nyāyānusāra*[71] he distinguishes between different types of existence:[72] the inherent nature *(svabhāva)* of a *dharma* exists in past, present and future, but its ability to act causally *(kāritra)* exists only in the present. So the presence or absence of *svabhāva* does not determine a *dharma*'s temporal status, but does determine whether it is a primary existent *(dharma, dravyasat)* or a secondary existent *(prajñaptisat)*. Primary existents are the elementary building blocks of reality which cannot be further divided either physically or conceptually, whereas secondary existents are conceptually constructed entities composed of, and dependent on, *dharma*-s. This classification leads to a definition of the Two Truths according to the Vaibhāṣikas the implications of which will emerge later.

> *Existents are of two sorts: those which exist substantially, inherently, and those which exist as designations. These two categories correspond, in fact, to the distinction between ultimate truth and experiential truth.*[73]

Śāntarakṣita's argument also rests on other assumptions that revolve around Vaibhāṣika epistemology. One of these is the theory that consciousness is always intentional, in other

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Tomorrow's pot exists today as a future pot. The future of a thing occurs before its present existence, that is, when its present existence is yet to be. Today's pot exists as a present pot today." (Sopa and Hopkins, 1989, p.180 and 192). This theory was deemed necessary to accomodate memory and imagination within the context of the intentionality of consciousness.

[71]This text is now extant only in Chinese. Parts of it have been translated into French by Poussin (1937).

[72]See Paul Williams' article *'On the Abhidharma Ontology'*, in JIP 9 (1981), pp.227-257; and the Vaibhāṣika chapter in *On Being Mindless: Buddhist meditation and the mind body problem* by Paul J. Griffiths, Open Court, La Salle, Illinois, 1986, pp.43-75.

[73]Translated from Poussin (1937), a:28.

words it is always consciousness of something, and this is combined with an *a priori* assumption that the object of cognition must exist. Along with this, they hold a causal theory of cognition. There must be a referential cause of cognition, namely the object of cognition, so that every moment of cognition arises from two factors coming together: an object and the corresponding sense-organ. This principle is necessary in the Vaibhāṣika system since cognition, being a conditioned phenomenon, arises from multiple causes. Furthermore, the senses are said to apprehend the sensory world directly, as it is; in other words, there is unmediated contact between the senses and their corresponding sensory objects.[74] This is consistent with the idea that objects of cognition exist, and in the particular case of unconditioned *dharma*-s apprehended through meditation, these also must exist as they are objects of the mental consciousness *(manovijñāna)*. However, existence is usually characterized by 'the three marks':[75] impermanence (*anitya*), suffering (*duḥkha*) and no-self (*anātman*) or, in an alternative enumeration, by arising, old age and impermanence; so to say that anything 'exists eternally' is a contradiction in terms unless we can distinguish between what it means for a conditioned thing to exist, and what it means for an unconditioned thing to exist. This problem was a subject of debate between Vaibhāśikas and Sautrāntikas.[76] The theory developed by Saṃghabhadra is one response.

As Śāntarakṣita argues that an eternal object would give rise to an eternal cognition of it, he is also assuming that the nature of the object of cognition corresponds to the nature of the cognition itself. This is so because they are causally connected, and in Buddhist logic a cause can only produce an effect of the same species.[77] The problem is that this

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[74]AK 1:42a, op.cit., p.114: "It is the organ of sight which sees visible matter."
[75]*Saṃyutta Nikāya* IV.259 and *Aṅguttara Nikāya* IV.293.
[76]See AK and AKB 2:45c-d, op.cit., pp.238-9.
[77]See Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, 6.k.9b (Hattori, 1969:68). "A result that is different could not be found."

goes against another Buddhist tenet, namely that consciousness itself is not unconditioned but momentary. Indeed, its intentionality alone makes it momentary. Hence Śāntarakṣita's conclusion that two cognitions of the same unconditioned object would have to occur simultaneously if both these principles were to be satisfied.

Śāntarakṣita's argument in verse 3 implies that since consciousness is a stream of awareness of events occurring in time, it cannot apprehend an object that is not also of that nature.[78] This does not in itself imply that *nirvāṇa* and other unconditioned *dharma*-s are untenable, but it does imply that even if they were to exist, we would not be able to know them. The downfall of the Vaibhāṣika position is that it asserts that *nirvāṇa* is an object of knowledge, which it is bound to do since it holds that consciousness is always intentional. The Vaibhāṣika view is logically absurd, and has been defeated through *prasaṅga* reasoning.

Śāntarakṣita's refutation in verses 3-5 bears on the existence of one type of ultimate in the Vaibhāṣika system, namely unconditioned primary existents. But the implications of his refutation are more far-reaching than they may at first seem. His argument identifies the main flaw as being the very possibility that anything unconditioned can be an object of consciousness. But for the Vaibhāṣikas, the ultimate (whether conditioned or unconditioned *dharma*-s) can always be an object of consciousness, indeed it is apprehended either conceptually through reductionist analysis[79] or in an *arhat*'s meditation. A more

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[78]This point was made by mKhan po Chos grags in his oral commentary on this text, in Hookham (1989).
[79]By 'reductionist analysis', I refer here to the Buddhist method of analytically reducing things to their parts, and the parts to their parts, and so on. It is a logical sequence which deconstructs the apparent wholeness of composite entities by revealing that they are not only composed of parts, but are nothing other than the sum of their parts. Infinite regress is avoided by asserting that partless particles are ultimate, and hence the building blocks of reality. The point of the analysis, which is carried out by using logic and contemplative meditation together, is that the student realizes that once it is broken down into its component parts, nothing remains that can be called a whole over and above the sum of its parts. Since the resulting notion of a lack

fundamental flaw, then, lies in the whole Vaibhāṣika approach to the Two Truths. If ultimate truth is defined as an object of consciousness *(vijñāna)*, it can never be a true ultimate since the cognition process is momentary and conditioned. At best it is only a logical ultimate. In Chapter IX on the Two Truths we will consider whether the same flaw applies to Mādhyamika ideas about the apprehension of the ultimate.

Next, in verse 6, Śāntarakṣita attacks these same unconditioned *dharma*-s on the grounds that they are, in fact, subject to causation and are not really unconditioned. They arise by the power of successive (preceding) moments.[80] The *Abhidharmakośa* explains this in several ways. For example, it is said that *nirvāṇa* depends on certain *indriyas*, faculties that have the power to bring something about.

> *The five faculties—faith, force, memory, absorption, discernment—are the support of* nirvāṇa. Nirvāṇa *is generated, appears for the first time, through the first pure faculty,* anājñātamājñāsyāmīndriya. Nirvāṇa *lasts, is developed, through the second pure faculty,* ājñendriya. Nirvāṇa *is 'experienced' by the third pure faculty,* ājñātāvīndriya, *for, through this faculty, one experiences the satisfaction and well-being of deliverance.*[81]
>
> *The result of* arhat *is obtained through nine* indriyas*: the mental organ, either satisfaction, pleasure or indifference, the five moral faculties,* ājñendriya *and* ājñātavīndriya.[82]

In addition, the Vaibhāśikas assert that a person masters or appropriates the unconditioned states by means of a *dharma* named *prāpti* (acquisition, possession, mastery). "As for unconditioned *dharma*-s, there is *prāpti* of *pratisaṁkhyānirodha* and *apratisaṁkhyā-nirodha*."[83] The process is further explained: "Possession *(prāpti)* has an effect. It is the

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of inherent existence is arrived at through reasoning and experienced in meditation, it holds personal conviction.

[80]MAL 6: snga ma snga ma'i skad cig gi// mthu yis 'byung bar 'gyur ba na//

[81]AKB 2:6, op.cit., p.159.

[82]AKB 2:16c, op.cit., p.177.

[83]AK 2:36c, op.cit., p.207.

cause of the arising of the *dharma*-s".[84] All this certainly appears to indicate that the two unconditioned *dharma*-s that are apprehended through meditation are the results of a causal process. However, we should note that the Vaibhāśika theory of causation is different from that of other Buddhist schools. When they assert *dharma*-s to be *kāraṇa-hetu*, that is, they function as the cause for something else to arise, this can be applied in one of two ways. "What is called cause or reason for existence [i.e. *kāraṇahetu*] may be what is capable of causing, or of not causing an obstacle".[85] In other words, the Vaibhāṣikas admit that a *dharma* may be involved in the causal process passively, as it were, simply by virtue of not preventing something else from arising.

The Vaibhāṣikas were clearly sensitive about criticism on this issue, and it re-appears later in the *Abhidharmakośa* at 2:55d. In this passage, they maintain that "the unconditioned has neither cause nor result", and explain this by adding that "it is the obtaining or the possession *(prāpti)* of cessation which is the result of the path, and not cessation itself". So although the path is not strictly speaking the cause of cessation, one can loosely say that *pratisaṁkhyānirodha* is the result of the path. Furthermore, it is correct to say that unconditioned things are themselves causes *(kāraṇahetu)* but only in the sense that they do not create an obstacle to the arising of any *dharma*. However, they are not involved in the causal process in the usual sense since they do not produce results. "Being outside of time, [an unconditioned thing] can neither project nor produce a result". Interestingly, the Vaibhāṣikas defend the need to assert unconditioned things as causes on the grounds that otherwise they could not function as "an object as condition" *(ālambana-pratyaya)* of the intentional consciousness that refers to them.[86] So the whole problem

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[84]AKB 2:36d, op.cit., p.208.
[85]AKB 2:50a, op.cit., p.256.
[86] See Pruden, op.cit., pp.278-280.

derives from a rigid theory on the intentionality of consciousness. We might conclude that if consciousness is asserted as only intentional, we can never know an ultimate truth since cognition necessarily arises from a conditioned consciousness apprehending a conditioned object by means of conditioned senses. It follows that even if there is something that is true ultimately, cognition of it would behave in the same way as cognition of relative things. Even *nirvāṇa* in such a system is not true liberation since it is an object of conditioned consciousness like any other. On the rNying ma view of what is meant by ultimate truth, this is absurd.[87]

Verse 7 of the MAL restates the argument of verse 6, while verse 8 concludes Śāntarakṣita's first refutation: that of the existence of permanent entities asserted by non-Buddhist and Buddhist *darśana*-s. The humour of verse 8 is revealing, where interest in the nature of unconditioned phenomena is likened to the curiosity displayed by lustful women in the body of a eunuch. Maybe Śāntarakṣita is keen to dismiss these opponents, and eager to move on to what he sees as more interesting and substantial topics. Indeed, the question as to whether anything permanent and unconditioned exists smacks of the type of metaphysical speculation which the Buddha rejected as being fruitless.[88] The point Śāntarakṣita is making in this stanza is that since a permanent, unconditioned *nirvāṇa* can not be the object of a conditioned consciousness, then it cannot be the eternal end to conditioned existence; consequently, it does not serve the function that it was meant to perform. And if investigating *nirvāṇa* is not an aid to liberation, then it is useless since the purpose of knowledge is always liberation.[89] Even here, Śāntarakṣita is pointing out con-

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[87] See Chapter IX below.

[88]See Harvey (1990), pp.65-6. Sūtra passages on the undetermined questions that Buddha did not answer include Samyutta IV.373-400, Majjhima I.126-31 and I.395.

[89]As Vasubandhu asserts at the beginning of the AK: "Apart from the discernment of the *dharma*-s, there is no means to extinguish the defilements, and it is by reason of the defilements that the world wanders in the ocean of existence. So it is with a view to this discernment that the Abhidharma has been, they say, taught

tradictions inherent in the Vaibhāṣika system without voicing his own view. Whether or not we agree with the idea that knowledge has a soteriological goal does not matter; the point is that this school is internally inconsistent.

VI.2.3 Refuting persons as truly existent unitary entities

In verse 9 of the MAL, Śāntarakṣita refutes the true existence of persons. It is important to note here that he is dealing specifically with concepts of the person which fall under the category of 'permanent unitary phenomena'.[90] So for example, he is not refuting any concept of the person based on partless moments since he has not yet established that such moments are neither one nor many.[91]

> **Other than as momentary or non-momentary the person *(gang zag, pudgala)* cannot be demonstrated. That it's nature is neither unitary nor multiple is therefore clearly and thoroughly recognized.**
>
> *skad cig skad cig ma yin par// gang zag bstan du mi rung bas//*
> *gcig dang du ma'i rang bzhin dang// bral bar gsal bar rab tu shes//*

Although the refution of the true existence of persons is one of the hallmarks of Buddhism, Śāntarakṣita only devotes one stanza to this in the MAL. The brevity of his refutation must be seen in context. Firstly, the issue of persons had been debated from the earliest days of Buddhist philosophy, as testified by the *Kathāvatthu* which is dated to the third century B.C.E. The philosophical arguments had been explored in detail by several masters before Śāntarakṣita, in particular by Nāgārjuna (MMK chapters VIII and XVIII), by Vasubandhu (AK chapter IX), by Bhāvaviveka (MMH Chapter IV: 89-92) and by Candrakīrti (MAV 6:120-165). Secondly, Śāntarakṣita had already reviewed the argu-

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[by the Buddha]. AKB 1:2c-d, op.cit., p.57.

[90]Kamalaśīla's *pañjikā* says that what is thoroughly established to be a person in this case is an entity whose nature is either unitary or multiple, existing as an aggregation [of parts] each of which is permanent. re zhig de ltar rtag pa'i phung po gnas pa rnams la gcig dang du ma'i rang bzhin dang bral bar bsgrubs pa yin no// Ichigō (1985:43). MALP P.93a.

[91]Oral commentary by mKhan po Chos grags.

ments himself in chapter VII of the TS. Does the brevity of the MAL's treatment of the topic imply that he had nothing to add? It does; but there are wider implications to the issue of the refutation of persons as we shall argue.

The use of the term *gang zag (pudgala)* in verse 9 indicates that this refutation targets the Pudgalavādins, and is not intended to address non-Buddhist views of the person. In particular, according to the commentaries, Śāntarakṣita is concerned with the doctrine of the Vātsīputrīyas *(gnas ma bu pa)* who are classified as a subschool of the Saṃmatīyas.[92] Unfortunately, their views are known to us largely from statements made by their opponents, there being little surviving Vātsīputrīya literature.[93] Bareau (1955:115-120) has summarised the main theses attributed to them under forty different headings, ranging across many aspects of Buddhist doctrine. For the purposes of the refutation in verse 9, the views that are relevant here are the following: the person *(pudgala)* is perceived *(upalabhyate)* as a manifest entity *(sāksītkṛtaparamārthena)*. The person is neither identical *(sama)* with the aggregates *(skandha)* nor different *(visama)* from them. It exists neither within the aggregates nor outside them. The person *(pudgala)* is that which transmigrates *(saṃkrāmati)* from one life to the next. The person *(pudgala)* is the subject of knowledge *(jānāti dharma)*. The knowable *(jñeya)* is either expressible *(abhilāpya)* or inexpressible *(anabhilāpya)*, and the *pudgala* is inexpressible. The fetters *(saṃyojana)*, that

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[92]There were various traditions for explaining the origins and development of Buddhist schools in India. In summary, the Vātsīputrīyas appear to have developed as a subschool of the Sarvāstivādins some 300-400 years after Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. They then subdivided into four subschools: the Dharmottarīya, Bhadrāyanīya, Saṃmatīya and Ṣaṇṇagarika. However, the Saṃmatīyas became so widespread that by the 7th century the Vātsīputrīyas were considered to be a subschool of the Saṃmatīyas rather than the other way round. See André Bareau (1955), *Les Sectes Bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*; Etienne Lamotte (1958), *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*; Edward J. Thomas (1933), *The History of Buddhist Thought*; and Samuel Beal (1884), *Buddhist Records of the Western World.*

[93]Williams (2000:124ff.) notes two surviving texts in Chinese translation. For a detailed study of the surviving texts and their doctrines, see Bhiksu Thich Tien Chau, *The Literature of the Personalists of Early Buddhism,* English translation by Sara Boin-Webb, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam Buddhist Research Institute, 1997; and 'Person and Self' by Lance Cousins, in *Buddhism into the Year 2000: International Conference, Proceedings,* Bangkok and Los Angeles, Dhammakaya Foundation, 1994.

which can be bound *(saṃyojanīya)* and the person *(pudgala)* are reals. Only one unconditioned *(asaṃskṛta) dharma* is accepted, namely *nirvāṇa*. The Buddha's teaching is partly esoteric since it has three levels of meaning *(artha)*: revealing the faults that lead to birth and death; revealing the virtuous acts that lead to liberation *(vimukti)*; and that which cannot be revealed.

Prior to Śāntarakṣita, this so-called 'personalist' doctrine had been refuted in various ways. In Chapter IV of his *Madhyamakahṛdaya* Bhāvaviveka[94] directly attacks the Vātsīputrīya contention that the *pudgala* is substantially real and also inexpressible, claiming that it is merely imputed and is just as expressible as, say, a perfume.[95] Furthermore, its essential nature *(mtshan nyid)* cannot be perceived as other than any one of the aggregates, so it is as non-existent as a flower in the sky. Finally, he dismisses the Vātsīputrīya position on the basis of logical error. If one maintains that "although it cannot be pointed out exactly, and although it is indescribable, nevertheless the *pudgala* is real", one's statement fails because the reason *(hetu)* is uncertain, that is, over-extended. The *pudgala* might be either indescribable but real like an excellent perfume, or indescribable and unreal like the complexion of a barren woman's child. In other words, reality is not necessarily a corollary of indescribability.

Candrakīrti's refutation of the Vātsīputrīya doctrine is found in verses 146-149 of chapter VI of the *Madhyamakāvatāra*. He takes the argument significantly further and asserts that whatever is said to be inexpressible *cannot* substantially exist. First, Candrakīrti

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[94] MMH ch.IV, vv.89-92. Tibetan and Sanskrit texts in Iida (1969), pp.195-198.
[95] Perfume is often used as an example by Sautrāntikas to illustrate phenomena that are both present and not present. Scents often linger long after the object that smelled has gone. Furthermore, it is notoriously difficult to actually describe a scent.

argues in verse 147[96] that anything that is established as existing must be established not only as uniquely characterized but also as distinct from other existents; therefore if the self is proved to be an existent entity, it must be expressible since it must be distinguable from other entities. Second, in verse 148[97] he argues that just as an object like a pot is accepted by the Vātsīputrīyas as neither identical with, nor different from, its ground of labelling (e.g. form), by the same token the person can be said to be neither identical with nor different from its aggregates. But this being so, the person *(bdag)* is no more of a real entity than a pot. And thirdly, in verse 149[98] he refutes the possibility of a truly existing person being neither the same as, nor different from, the aggregates on account of the general principle that all existents can be considered in two ways: as identical to themselves and as different from other things. Since the person *(bdag)* of the Vātsīputrīyas lacks these two qualities, it cannot be regarded as existent. This last argument is unsatisfactory, however, since it hinges on the very point at issue: whether it is indeed coherent to assert a type of existence that is neither identical nor different from that of other entities.

These arguments of Candrakīrti's reflect a crucial feature of the Mādhyamika understanding of emptiness *(śūnyatā)*, which is that it makes no sense to talk of a "real entity" that exists in a context defined by its identity and characteristic qualities on the one hand, and its difference from other similarly real entities on the other hand. Entities are real insofar as they participate in the relationships that make up everyday experience. Emptiness *(śūnyatā)* therefore implies the ultimate insubstantiality of this interpenetrating maze of

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[96]gang phyir gzugs las sems brjod med mi rtogs// dngos yod brjod med rtogs pa ma yin nyid// gal te btag 'ga' dngos por grub gyur na// sems ltar grub dngos brjod du med mi 'gyur//

[97]gang phyir khyed bum dngos por ma grub pa'i// ngo bo gzugs sogs las brjod med 'gyur bas// bdag gang phung po las brjod med 'gyur te// rang gis yod par grub par rtogs mi bya//

[98]khyod kyi rnam shes rang bdag las gzhin ni// mi 'dod gzugs sogs las gzhin dngos 'dod cing// dngos la rnampa de nyid mthong 'gyur ba// de phyir bdag med dngos chos dang bral phyir//

relationships, and never a negation of our conventional experience of them.[99] To put this another way, one Mādhyamika critique of the Vātsīputrīya position could be that it fudges the distinction between conventional and ultimate truths; it neither accords the *pudgala* the accepted characteristics of conventional existence (e.g. identity and difference), nor does it claim that it has ultimate existence since the only unconditioned *dharma*, *nirvāṇa*, implies the cessation of the *pudgala*. The Vātsīputrīya attempt at creating a third alternative to fit the *pudgala* is just muddled thinking.

Vasubandhu's refutation of the *pudgala* in chapter IX of the *Abhidharmakośa* is far more comprehensive than either of these two. He examines the relation between *pudgala* and the *skandha*-s; what it means to say that the *pudgala* can be perceived; the existence of the *pudgala* as a justification for omniscience; the birth of persons; *pudgala* and *jiva*; *pudgala* and *karma*; *pudgala* as necessary to explain memory and recognition; and *pudgala* as the basis for consciousness. We cannot review all his arguments here, so let it suffice to say that in the main they follow the first chapter of the *Kathāvatthu* very closely.[100] Vasubandhu's originality is to take the Vātsīputrīyas at their word, arguing that if indeed the *pudgala* is indescribable, as they claim, then there is nothing we can say about it. In that case we cannot say that it exists (as a new category of *dharma*), nor that it does not exist. In fact, as soon as they say that the *pudgala* is a real they are guilty of inconsistency because they are describing the indescribable.

The refutation of the *pudgala* presented by Śāntarakṣita in TS 336-349 is relatively con-

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[99]See *The Emptiness of Emptiness: An introduction to early Indian Mādhyamika* by C.W. Huntington, Jr., University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1989:258, n.179.
[100]For a detailed analysis of this refutation, see *The Refutation of the Self in Vasubandhu's* Abhidharmakośa, unpublished dissertation by D. Messent submitted to the University of Cambridge, UK, 1996.

cise, and indeed Kamalaśīla (TSP 348) acknowledges chapter IX of the AK as the reference on this subject, and the reason why the TS does not need to enter into all the arguments again. Śāntarakṣita rehearses Candrakīrti's point that if an entity exists, it must by definition be expressible as the same or different from other existents. He adds that there is a further internal contradiction in the Vātsīputrīya view, namely that by asserting that the *pudgala* is inexpressible they are, by implication, saying that it is in fact different from the *skandha*-s which are held to be expressible. He re-asserts (as we saw above) that existence means a capacity for effective action, and that this is concomitant with momentariness; so if the *pudgala* cannot be said to be momentary, it does not exist.

So how does Śāntarakṣita's argument in the MAL sit in this context? Clearly, one can argue that it does not do justice to the complexity and, some might say, subtlety, of the Vātsīputrīya view. Śāntarakṣita focuses only on their assertion that the *pudgala* is permanent. Insofar as permanence can be a corollary of true existence, it is legitimate to say within the framework of rNying ma thinking that whatever other characteristics the *pudgala* is claimed to have, refuting its permanence is tantamount to refuting its true existence, and is therefore a direct and succinct method of refuting the entire doctrine. Mi pham's commentary[101] explains that the view of the *gnas ma bu pa* is that the person exists as an entity which serves as the support of actions and their results *(las 'bras kyi rten)*. But just as it cannot be said to be either one with the aggregates *(phung po)* or different from them, similarly it cannot be spoken of as permanent or impermanent either. His implication is therefore that if the *pudgala* cannot in fact be said to be permanent, then it cannot be truly existent. By extending this same argument, Śāntarakṣita concludes that we cannot therefore say of the *pudgala* that it has a unitary nature, nor that it has a

[101]C. p.170ff; V.p.129ff.

multiple nature. As Vasubandhu had argued, we cannot say anything of it at all.

Verse 9 of the MAL is therefore unremarkable in that it does not differ significantly from previous Buddhist refutations of the *pudgala*, nor does it add to them. But Mi pham's commentary on this verse is of interest and goes into considerably more detail than the verse itself, highlighting for us the controversies he was addressing in the context of 19th century Tibet. Tibetan interpretations of Indian Buddhist doctrines of the 'person' and the 'self' are amongst the key views dividing the various Tibetan schools of Buddhism.[102]

Limiting ourselves to what is of immediate concern in relation to Śāntarakṣita's position, Mi pham implicitly rejects two dGe lugs pa interpretations of the Svātantrika view on persons. The first of these, propounded by the Tibetan dGe lugs pa Gung thang, claims that the Svātantrikas say that phenomena cannot be merely imputed by thought, but must be posited through the force of their appearance to unmistaken consciousness.[103] That is, unlike the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas, they maintain that a phenomenon can be found when sought among its bases of designation. According to the Mongolian Ngag dbang dpal ldan (born 1797), the Sautrāntika-Svātantrikas assert that the illustration of the person from among the bases to which it is imputed is the mental consciousness, whereas for the Yogācāra-Svātantrikas the person is the continuum of the mental consciousness.[104]

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[102]For a critical survey of this debate based on dGe lugs pa sources, see *Assertions on the person in Buddhist doctrines of selflessness*, Appendix to *The Meaning of Mind in the Mahāyāna Buddhist Philosophy of Mind Only*, unpublished Ph.D. by Joe Bransford Wilson Jr., University of Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1984 (micro-film 1986). Vol.2, pp.781-802.

[103]Gung thang dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me (1762-1823), in his *Grub mtha' bzhi'i 'dod tshul sogs dris la nsna tshogs kyi skor*, cited by Bransford Wilson, op.cit., p.790ff.

[104]*Grub mtha' chen mo'i mchan 'grel dka' gnad mdud grol blo gsal gces nor, Annotations for ('Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's) "Great Exposition of Tenets", Freeing the Knots of the Difficult Points, A Precious Jewel of Clear Thought*, 26a.1-2. Cited by Bransford Wilson, op.cit., p.791.

According to dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po (1728-91),[105] both Sautrantika-Svātantrikas and Yogācāra-Svātantrikas assert that a subtle, neutral mental consciousness is an illustration of the person—in other words, that there is no significant difference between the two Svātantrika schools.[106] According to Mi pham, however, Śāntarakṣita's view is that what we conventionally call a 'person' is merely dependently imputed onto the aggregates, which are the basis of the imputation.[107] No 'person' can be logically demonstrated to exist other than the five momentary aggregates, so it has no ultimate truth. Yet, in relative truth the five aggregates function as the cause for the observation of a self. When undifferentiated *(cha ma phyes pa)* they are apprehended as one and then called 'the person', and the instants that make up the continuity of the aggregates are apprehended as one and called 'the continuum'. Mi pham points out that this process is identical to that which operates when we say that we apprehend a vase or any other object. The observed object of a mind apprehending 'vase' is merely the imputed vase, while the basis for the imputation is posited to be the observation of the specifically characterized [phenomena] of form and so forth.[108] Similarly, what is observed by a mind apprehending 'person' is the five aggregates. If, for example, the self is considered to be the agent of actions, after investigation we find that the self is merely an imputation of one on to many (e.g. the agent of past actions, the one who experiences in the present, the one who will experience in the future). What is called 'person' is seen to be nothing but a succession of momentary

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[105]This Tibetan scholar was the reincarnation of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa and author of the textbook literature of sGo mang college, 'Bras spungs monastery, Lha sa, and bKra shis 'khyil monastery, A mdo province.

[106]*Grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa rin po che'i phreng ba* in *Cutting Through Appearances:Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism*, by Geshe Lhundup Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins, Snow Lion, Ithaca, 1989, pp.287-8.

[107]See Chapter VIII for further discussion of sectarian views concerning the person and its basis of imputation.

[108]bum 'dzin gyi blos dmigs yul btags pa'i bum pa tsam yin kyang/ gdags gzhi gzugs la sogs pa'i rang mtshan dmigs par 'jog pa bzhin no/

[occurrences] *(rim pas skad cig ma)*. Moreover even the aggregates themselves are found, under investigation, to be imputations.

On the face of it, then, Mi pham's analysis characterizes the Yogācāra-Svātantrika view of the person in a different way from certain dGe lugs pas. He asserts that for Śāntarakṣita, what is conventionally known as the person is merely imputed to the aggregates *(skandha*-s; *phung po)* which do not ultimately exist themselves but are also imputations. However, the final point he makes is significant: he says that the person under consideration in this verse is 'the basis of actions and their results' *(las 'bras kyi rten)* which should not be confused with ideas of the self based on the ground for the infusion of habitual tendencies and so forth *(bag chas bgo zhi sogs kyi rten du go bar mi bya'o)*; that is, ideas of the person imputed on the basis of the Yogācāra notion of *ālaya* consciousness. So the subject has not yet been fully addressed in the MAL, and a final definition of Śāntarakṣita's view on persons must await further examination of the text (in Chapter VIII).

In summary, it is useful to differentiate between 'person' and 'self'. By 'person' *(pudgala)* we refer to the individual who is the object of unmistaken conventional apprehension, and by 'self' *(atman)* we refer to a metaphysical entity that is not an object of worldly apprehension. Buddha never denied the conventional existence of persons but he did refute the inherent existence of a 'self'.[109] An analysis of Vasubandhu's refutation of the *pudgala* shows that the fundamental error committed by Vātsīputrīyas is to have confused these two.[110] They justified their philosophically established *pudgala* on the grounds that it

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[109]See *Samyutta Nikaya* IV.400-01 when the monk Vacchagotta asks the Buddha whether a self exists. The Buddha neither said that it exists (the extreme of eternalism) nor denied that it exists (the extreme of nihilism), so the matter is considered 'an undetermined *(avyākata)* question'. In *Samyutta* II.17 the Buddha accepts the conventional existence of the empirical world. For a discussion of this topic see *The Selfless Mind* by Peter Harvey, Curzon Press, 1995, pp.17-42.
[110]Messent (1996).

accounts for the conventional apprehension of the existence of persons. In the light of Mi pham's commentary, it is evident that Śāntarakṣita is not refuting the belief in the existence of persons on a conventional level, but only philosophical theories of the 'self', for such theories mistakenly assert the person or self to be truly existent when it is only conventionally so. Having said this, we may well have reason to question the efficacy of Śāntarakṣita's refutation here, bearing in mind that in his time the Pudgalavādins were probably the most numerous group of Nikāya Buddhists in India.[111] Despite the many well argued refutations of the *pudgala* over the centuries, some of which we have referred to here, the number of adherents to this doctrine continued to increase. This may serve to illustrate the fact that on account of our ignorance *(avidyā)* and of our innate attachment to self-identity *(ātman)*, logical reasoning *(yukti)* is not sufficient to help us realize self-lessness *(anātman)*. To be effective, reasoning must go hand in hand with meditation *(śamatha* and *vipaśyāna)*.[112] The limitations inherent in even sound Mādhyamika arguments are especially apparent when the existence of persons is concerned.

It is interesting to note that this concern is addressed by the 18th century dGe lugs pa scholar lCang skya rol pa'i rdo rje (1717-86) who questioned the effectiveness of logical reasoning in the MAL. Following Tibetan tradition, he distinguishes between cognitive ignorance or misunderstanding *(avidyā, ma rig pa)* and innate ignorance *(sahaja, lhan skyes)*. Concluding his analysis of the various refutations in the MAL, he writes:

> *These are the ways to refute the object of negation imputed by our own and other schools, but in order also to refute the object of the innate conception of true existence, one must know well how damage is done by these reasonings.*[113]

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[111]Bareau, op.cit., pp.38-39. Our evidence is based on inscriptions and Chinese travelogues dating up to 100 years before Śāntarakṣita. Reports spanning the period between 2nd and 7th centuries C.E. show no significant change in the preponderance of Pudgalavādins, so it is reasonable to suppose that their numbers had not significantly changed in proportion to other schools by the 8th century. However, it is not clear whether the Chinese are referring to those who held Pudgalavāda tenets, or those ordained in the related Vinaya. I am indebted to Paul Williams for this last observation.

[112] Hopkins (1983:10; 199).

lCang skya acknowledges that Śāntarakṣita's logical method is adequate for eliminating misunderstanding associated with erroneous philosophical views, but he wonders how effective it is in eliminating the innate *(sahaja, lhan skyes)* conception of true existence from which all beings in *saṃsāra* suffer. This latter type of ignorance includes the innate sense of self. The issue is more fully considered in Chapter VIII below.

VI.2.4 Refuting the true existence of general unitary pervasive entities

Having refuted the true existence of particular unitary pervasive entities asserted by either Buddhist or non-Buddhist philosophical schools, Śāntarakṣita considers the true existence of general unitary pervasive entities. According to Mi pham's commentary, this refutation is found in the first two lines of verse 10.

> **Since they are related to that which has various directions/sides,**
> **How can pervasives be unitary?**
> *tha dad phyogs can dang 'brel phyir// khyab rnams gcig pur ga la 'gyur//*

Generally speaking, pervasion *(khyab pa)* is of two kinds: (a) where the pervader is concomitant with several entities that are of the same essence, as for example, in the case of universals *(spyi)* and particulars *(bye brag)*; and (b) when the pervader is concomitant with several entities that are of a different essence, as for example, in the case of a dye pervading a piece of cloth. In addition, Mi pham notes that in the case of (a), the Vaiśeṣikas assert that universals and their instances are separate substances, whereas the Sāṃkhyas claim that they are of identical substance. The refutation made by Śāntarakṣita in this verse covers both these possibilities.

Mi pham summarises the argument as follows.[114] If the pervading entity is not related to

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[113]lCang skya's Grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa (Presentation of Tenets) transl. Lopez (1987:370).
[114]C p.177. de la sogs pa khyab byed rnams gang yin yang rung rigs pa 'dis 'gog pa yin te// tha dad pa'i phyogs can nam/ phyogs tha dad pa can te khyab bya'i dngos po mi 'dra ba shing la sogs pa dang 'brel ba'i

particulars, then it cannot be posited as a pervading entity at all. If it is related to particulars, and if one accepts that all particulars are conditioned and made of different aspects or parts, then we must ask whether the pervader of one aspect is identical to the pervader of another aspect; or is it different? For example, is the space that pervades a tree to the east the same as the space that pervades the same tree to the west? If it is, then the pervaded object must in fact have a unitary nature just as the pervader is said to have. Also, it would follow that when one tree is pervaded by space, then all trees must be similarly pervaded simultaneously. Therefore, if particulars are conditioned whatever entity pervades them cannot be unitary.

This argument appears to be flawed. The example used by Mi pham in this passage is curious. Space is surely characterized by its lack of spatial determination; we cannot point east and say 'there is space', and then point west and say 'there is another space'. There is no boundary between eastern space and western space, and if our thinking espouses the notion of directions, these are determined in relation to particular locatable objects and not in relation to general pervaders such as space. So it is arguably fallacious to apply the parameter of location to a pervading entity which is characterized by unlocatability. This is especially the case because of the way Dharmakīrti differentiates between particular entities and general entities (this distinction is the basis for the two subheadings of this section of the MAL). Being an individual or particular means having clear identity conditions specifiable in terms of determinate spatio-temporal location and distinction in entity; this is what he calls a specifically characterized phenomenon *(svalakṣana, rang mtshan).*

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phyir na/ khyab pa'i dngos por 'dod pa de rnams kyang gcig pur bden par ga la 'gyur te/ gal te nam mkha' dang spyi la sogs pa khyab pa'i dngos po de dag khyab bya phyogs dang dus kyis bsdus pa'i dngos po de dag dang ma 'brel na ni khyab par 'jog mi rung la/ 'brel na ni shar phyogs kyi shing la khyab pa'i cha de nub phyogs kyi shing la khyab pa'i cha de dang gcig yin nam min/

Generally characterized phenomena *(sāmānyalakṣana, spyi mtshan)*, on the other hand, do not satisfy these identity conditions—and indeed it is on account of this that they are not accepted by Dharmakīrti as reals independent of cognizing minds.[115] It is therefore quite odd for Śāntarakṣita to apply location criteria to a general entity such as space. On the other hand, it must be conceded that some general pervasive entities occupy a somewhat ambiguous position between the two definitions given above. If we consider phenomena such as tastes and odours which do not occupy a clearly definable spatio-temporal location, should these be classified as general or as particular? The categorization itself may be at fault.

But what is being refuted here is the idea of general pervasive entities *that truly exist.* We have seen above how the Vaiśeṣikas asserted the true existence of six categories *(padārtha)* of universals,[116] of which the first is substance *(dravya)* which includes earth, water, fire, air, ether (*ākāśa*), time (*kala*), space, self (*ātman*) and mind (*manas*). Both space and time are therefore held to be permanent, truly existing pervading entities which are separate from the particulars that they pervade. The Buddhist refutation therefore makes sense only if we realize it is a refutation of the true existence of pervading entities such as space, and not a refutation of what is conventionally understood as space. Indeed, this refutation follows a similar argument to that used for the refutation of *īśvara*, because the fundamental problem Śāntarakṣita is pointing to in both cases is the nature of the *relationship* between truly existent unitary entities and the particulars of empirical experience.

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[115]See Dreyfus (1997:130).

[116]These are substance (*dravya*), quality *(guṇa)*, motion (*karman)*, universal (*sāmānya*), particularity (*viśeṣa*) and inherence (*samavāya*).

According to Mi pham, another category of the general pervasive entities refuted here by Śāntarakṣita is that of universals *(sāmānya, spyi)*. In considering these, Mi pham alludes to the detailed discussion in chapter XIII of the TS, where Śāntarakṣita examines especially the Vaiśeṣika idea of universals and categories. Śāntarakṣita argues that universals *(sāmānya)* have no objective existence but are merely conceptual constructs developed by way of other-exclusion. That is to say that when one sees branches endowed with leaves, one designates it 'tree' after eliminating all that is non-tree. This is the Buddhist theory of *apoha (sel ba)*, meaning 'exclusion of the contrary', a sophisticated semantic theory first developed by Dignāga, then by Dharmakīrti, and significantly extended by Śāntarakṣita himself.[117] A universal is a single contrary, that which appears in opposition to another, while a particular is a double contrary which not only appears in opposition to another but also to all that which is of concordant type coming down to the specifically characterized.[118] According to this view, both universals and particulars are merely imputations of one onto many, and so neither can be unitary entities.

Up to this point, Śāntarakṣita's philosophical concern has been ontological. He has refuted true existence as opponents have applied it to various entities, and has addressed the question of true existence in terms of its ontological claims, that is, as a mode of being that is permanent, independent, and unitary. On the question of universals, however, it is

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[117]See Dreyfus (1997:205-250); and Mokṣākaragupta in Kajiyama (1989:122-130). Dharmakīrti elaborated the theory of *apoha* whilst safeguarding the epistemological validity of language despite the absence of real universals. This he did by distinguishing perception (positive apprehension of reals) and inference (negative apprehension of universals which are the objects apprehended by thought). Propositional knowledge is due to the conceptual categorization of experiences, and this process is essentially negative, through elimination of the contrary. Śāntarakṣita modifies the theory so *apoha* refers not just to the elimination of the contradictory of a thing (non-x) but also to the representation or mental image that acts as a support of the conceptual process. These representations are eliminations (a) because they are distinct from other appearances and (b) because they are the cause of obtaining things that are excluded from others. TS 391.2-3: pratibhāsāntarād bhedādanyavyāvṛttavastunaḥ/ prāptihetutayā/ We examine Śāntarakṣita's understanding of mental images or aspects in Chapter VIII.

[118]de la gzhan las ldog par snang ba'i ldog pa chig rkyang spyi dang/ gzhan dang rang gi rigs mthun mtha' dag las kyang ldog pa'i ldog pa nyis tshog ni rang mtshan la 'bab pas bye brag yin la/ Mi pham, C.p.178.

significant that Mi pham's commentary switches the argument from the ontological realm to the semantic one. It would indeed be perfectly possible to attempt a refutation of universals on ontological grounds. This would entail an examination of issues such as whether universals denote reals that exist independently of the observer (and independently of language). The Nyāya view of universals is that they *are* denotational, and this is classed as an extreme form of realism with regard to universals. Yet Śāntarakṣita does not formulate an attack on the Nyāya view from an ontological perspective. He is interested in the *relationship* between truly existing unitary entities and manifold particulars—not in their true existence *per se*; the status of universals is approached from a semantic point of view, looking at the relationship between a universal and the nature of what it refers to. In this respect, Śāntarakṣita was building on the legacy of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, and his approach was a modern one in his day.

In concluding this first section on pervasive entities, we may wish to question the validity of categorizing *īśvara* as a particular rather than a general entity. Generally speaking, the principle represented by *īśvara* has no spatio-temporal location, and should logically fit into the general category. Certainly the Western concept of God would seem more of a general entity than a particular one. The justification for this Buddhist classification is that *īśvara* is considered to be the personal embodiment of the impersonal universal principle of *brahman*, and to the extent that *īśvara* is personal, and to the extent that he acts, he can be considered an individual entity. Similarly, to the extent that the Judaeo-Christian God is seen as a personal God, and the agent of action, he is an instance of a particular rather than a general entity. Nevertheless, within the terms of the respective definitions of what constitutes particular and general, the status of *īśvara* is ambiguous. Bearing this in mind, together with the other exceptional cases we mentioned above, the

classification on which this section is based (particular pervasive entities / general pervasive entities) is unsatisfactory.

In these initial verses, Śāntarakṣita has begun by refuting substantialist ontologies. He has done this by showing such positions to be internally incoherent by means of the 'neither one nor many' argument. By refuting the true existence of universals in verse 10, his field of enquiry shifted from the ontological to the semantic. This is a stepping stone to the epistemological enquiry he carries out in verses 16-61.

VII.1 What is at issue?

Śāntarakṣita's refutation of partless particles in verses 11-15 might well strike a modern reader as relatively uninteresting.[1] Similar refutations had frequently been made in Buddhist literature prior to this, and in any case modern science has rendered such discussions irrelevant. But it does, in fact, play a pivotal role in the progression of his argument. If minute particles are proven to have parts, all physical phenomena will necessarily be proven to have parts, since they are composed of minute particles.[2] It therefore entails the refutation of the true existence of the entire material world, as well as the rejection of realism. But the logical implications take us even further than this. If the objects of the five sense consciousnesses are not truly established, the sense consciousnesses themselves are not truly established because they depend on the sense objects for their production. Therefore, based simply on the refutation of partless particles, it can be inferred that neither sense consciousnesses nor their objects truly exist.[3] This reasoning leads directly to the detailed consideration of minds and cognition which spans verses 16-61. It provides the hinge between arguments around matter and arguments around minds.

From the philosophical point of view, the status of external phenomena could hardly be more crucial if we are seeking to determine the nature of Śāntarakṣita's Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis. Both Yogācāra and Madhyamaka separately refute the notion that external objects have any intrinsic existence *(svabhāva)*, but the implications they

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[1]The term used here for Skt. *paramāṇu*, Tib. *rdul phran* is 'partless particles' rather than 'atoms' as they are frequently translated. 'Particles' is preferred because modern science has shown atoms *not* to be the ultimate building blocks of matter since they can be split. In other words, the word 'atom' carries a specific scientific meaning which prejudices its use in philosophy. Since the main idea here is that *paramāṇu* refers to the most minute constituent of things, the term 'particle' is neutral and appropriate.
[2]Lopez (1987:183-4).
[3]TSP 1998.

draw from this and the methods they use are different. Mādhyamika refutations usually concern the ontological status of partless particles and the external objects they constitute, while Yogācārins typically focus on the epistemological aspects of the refutation. Yogācārins use the refutation of partless particles to establish idealism, but Mādhyamikas do not. Yogācārins refute external objects both ultimately and conventionally, whereas Mādhyamikas refute them ultimately but not conventionally. On the face of it, one can adopt one approach or the other, but not both at once.

How does Śāntarakṣita understand the status of the material world? The issue is that although material external phenomena do not exist for him ultimately, they do exist conventionally.[4] So to what extent does he espouse Yogācāra idealism at all? In which sense can it be justified to call him a *Yogācāra*-Mādhyamika? And if external phenomena exist conventionally, in which way do they exist? How does Śāntarakṣita's position distinguish itself from the Sautrāntika-based view of Bhāvaviveka? All these questions will allow us to begin to address the important topic of what Śāntarakṣita takes to be the given.

VII.2 Presenting Śāntarakṣita's argument

The remainder of Śāntarakṣita's argument in the MAL is concerned with his refutation of the oneness of what are technically termed "non-pervasive entities" *(ma khyab pa'i gcig bden dgag pa)*. This refutation extends from verse 11 to verse 61, and is divided into two parts. Firstly, in verses 11 to 15 Śāntarakṣita demolishes the Abhidharmic and Vaiśeṣika understanding of the existence of external reality. And secondly, in verses 16-61, he considers the nature of consciousness, and refutes the true existence of unitary moments of consciousness as held by all Buddhist and non-Buddhist schools other than the Madhyamaka school. Firstly, then, he considers the theory that there are truly existing particles

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[4]MAL 64.

(paramāṇu; rdul phran) that constitute material objects.

[11,12] Whether particles exist conjoined [with others], surrounded [by others] with intervals in-between, or immediately contiguous [with others], if it is claimed that the nature of the central particle that faces a [second] particle is the very same as the nature that faces a [third or fourth] particle, then earth, water and so on could not develop, could they?
'byar ba dang ni bskor ba 'am// bar med rnam par gnas kyang rung//
dbus gnas rdul phran rdul gcig la// bltas pa'i rang bzhin gang yin pa//
rdul phran gzhan la blta ba yang// de nyid gal te yin brjod na//
de lta yin na de lta bu// sa chu la sogs rgyas 'gyur ram//

[13] If one asserts that the side facing a [second] particle is different from the side facing a [third] particle, how then can the most subtle particles be unitary and partless?
rdul phran gzhan la lta ba'i ngos[5]*// gal te gzhan du 'dod na ni//*
rab tu phra rdul ji lta bur// gcig pu cha shas med par 'gyur//

[14] It has been proved that particles have no intrinsic nature. Therefore, the eye, substance, and so on, and the numerous [other entities] that are postulated as real by ourselves and others, are clearly devoid of intrinsic nature [too].
rdul phran rang bzhin med grub pa// de phyir mig dang rdzas la sogs//
bdag dang gzhan smras mang po dag// rang bzhin med par mngon pa yin//

[15] They are compounds composed of [particles]. Moreover, the nature of these entities, their composition, their qualities and type of function, and their general and particular characteristics, [all] come from these [particles].
de yi rang bzhin des brtsams dang// de yi yon tan de las bdag//
de yi spyi dang khyad par yang// de dag de dang 'du ba can//

The steps of Śāntarakṣita's argument are as follows. First, he shows that the existence of unitary partless particles is an absurdity (verses 11-13). Then, on this basis, he argues in verses 14 and 15 that the existence of composite entities—including entities that are objects of sensory experience as well as entities that are philosophical constructs—is thereby invalidated too. This corollary is presented in two stages: first, the general argument is stated in verse 14; and next, verse 15 establishes the proof of the argument by showing its pervasion *(khyab pa sgrub pa)*, that is, how it applies to all relevant cases. In summary, if particles do not truly exist, then any entity that is claimed to be composed of

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[5]The Tibetan text is mistakenly transliterated by Ichigō (1985:CXV) as "*rdul phran gzhan la lta ba 'ingos*".

such particles cannot exist either. It makes no sense to speak of a truly existing whole if that whole is made of non-truly existing parts (and if the whole is taken to be the mereological sum of its parts).[6]

His refutation targets the Abhidharmic view of external reality, which is known for its reductionist analysis of wholes into smaller and smaller parts.[7] The thrust of this analysis is to show that if a supposed whole can be broken down into constituent parts, either physically or through analysis, one finds that the 'whole' no longer exists, and one can then conclude that wholes are actually nothing other than the sum of their parts.[8] For example, if a vase is shattered into pieces, and then ground to a fine powder, one cannot really say that the heap of porcelain dust on the floor is a vase because it does not function like a vase. Porcelain dust in this example illustrates what are known as 'coarse particles' *(rdul phran)*, and according to Abhidharmic analysis, these can be broken down further into subtle particles *(rdul phra rab)*.[9] It takes a minimum of seven subtle particles to make one coarse particle[10] the latter being defined by Mi pham[11] as a particle that can be apprehended by the human senses.[12]

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[6]See the discussion on wholes and parts at the end of Chapter V.
[7]See King (1999:118ff); Williams (2000:88-9); Harvey (1990:83-4).
[8]Cf. *Milindhapañha*, I.1; and *Saṁyutta nikāya* i.135. The argument is that *since* wholes are a sum of parts, they are mere designations and have no intrinsic identity or existence.
[9]The equivalent terminology used by Vasubandhu and Saṁghabhadra is *paramāṇu* for a subtle, indivisible particle (sometimes translated as 'atom'), and *saṁghātaparamāṇu* for an aggregate of particles, occasionally rendered as 'molecule'.
[10]This is the minimum number of subtle particles necessary for a gross particle to become perceptible to beings in the Realm of Desire *(kāmadhātu)* according to Vasubandhu (AKB ii.22). Other schools had different theories. The Vaiśeṣikas maintained that atoms combine to make dyads, three of which combine to make the smallest perceivable object, exemplified by the particles of dust in a sunbeam. See King (1999: 106ff.)
[11]The points Mi pham makes in his commentary on the MAL are similar to those in his *mKhas pa'i tshul la jug pa'i sgo zhes bya ba'i bstan bcos* Tibetan text and translation in *Gateway to Knowledge*, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, Kathmandu, vol.I 1997 and vol. II 2000. His explanation of particles occurs in 1:22-23, vol.I p.21.
[12]It should be noted that this question was hotly debated by the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas. The Vaibhāṣikas maintained that gross particles individually possess the quality of being the cause of the arising of consciousness while the Sautrāntikas asserted that only collections of particles can be apprehended by the sense organs (AKB i.20a-b; and i.44a-b). For the Sautrāntikas, then, individual particles are imperceptible. Mi pham's definition is acceptable here because Śāntarakṣita is concerned with the Vaibhāṣika view.

The gross objects of our perception—ranging from large objects such as iron, water, rabbits, sheep, cows and sunbeams, to cite Mi pham's examples, to smaller objects such as louse eggs and grains of barley—are all composed of multiples of coarse particles. The general way of justifying this theory is to say that although the coarse can be split into parts and particles, it would be entirely non-existent if there were no final basis for its existence in the form of ultimate particles which cannot be split any further; that is, ultimate, subtle, partless particles. The theory of subtle particles is therefore a means to avoid infinite regress, or to avoid the conclusion that nothing exists at all.

We can summarise the principles on which the Abhidharmic position is based. (1) It assumes or infers the existence of external objects. (2) It rejects the intrinsic existence of wholes on the grounds that they are merely designations to a sum of parts; wholes could therefore be said to exist only conventionally. In Western terminology, it rejects substance or substrata-based theories of wholes in favour of bundles. (3) It posits the intrinsic existence of subtle partless parts, which function as the building blocks of material reality, and without which material objects would not exist at all. (4) It posits the existence of matter as distinct from mind.[13] And (5) it maintains that the human mind is capable of apprehending the reality of intrinsic existence as it is (specifically, partless particles can be perceived).[14] It is the combination of these positions that Śāntarakṣita rejects.

Mi pham's commentary indicates that what is at issue here is not so much the merits or demerits of the Abhidharmic reductionist analysis *per se*, but rather, what one takes the status of subtle particles *(rdul phra rab)* to be. Most[15] Buddhist schools agreed in a basic

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[13]It was noted in Chapter V that matter is characterized by extension and locatability whereas minds are determined by time. The material is not reducible to the mental, and vice versa.
[14]According to the Vaibhāṣikas.
[15]With the exception of the dGe lugs pa school following Tsong kha pa.

way about the designated status of wholes, but the status of particles caused doctrinal differences. Buddhist schools such as the Vaibhāṣikas, and certain non-Buddhist schools such as the Vaiśeṣikas, believed subtle particles to be permanent entities endowed with an intrinsic nature and a unique defining character.[16] Mādhyamikas, on the other hand, consider particles to be impermanent just like the composite entities which they make up.[17] Śāntarakṣita's refutation applies only to theories that uphold the permanence of particles because only these theories also assert the unitariness of particles. As we have seen, they actually define subtle particles as 'units', in the sense that particles are discrete elements acting as the 'building blocks' of reality.[18]

VII.3 Madhyamaka and Cittamātra refutations of the true existence of particles

VII.3.1 Madhyamaka refutations

The Madhyamaka refutation usually hinges on a logical analysis of causation, arguing the absurdity of any theory which holds that causes *(hetu, rgyu)* have an intrinsic power *(kriyā, bya ba)* to bring about their effects, and that this power is part of their essence or intrinsic nature *(svabhāva, rang bzhin)*. The Madhyamaka argumentation is sometimes applied to causation generally, as for example in the first chapter of Nāgārjuna's MMK, and sometimes applied specifically to the perception process, as in Chapter IX of the MMK. Āryadeva extends the argument to particles in Chaper IX of the CS where he

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[16]*Dharma*-s are defined as having a self-essence *(sasvabhāva)* and as being a primary existent *(dravyasat)*. Vasubandhu's definition (AKB i.2) is that a *dharma* is that which bears *(dhāraṇa)* self (or unique) characteristics.

[17]In chapter XV of the MMK, Nāgārjuna shows that the idea that anything has an essence or intrinsic nature *(svabhāva)* is incompatible with the Buddhist doctrines of impermanence, emptiness, and liberation. "Those who see [entities as having] an intrinsic nature, the nature of otherness, or as being [truly] existent or non-existent do not see the truth of the Buddha's teaching." svabhāvaṃ parabhāvaṃ ca bhāvaṃ cābhāvameva ca/ ye paśyanti na paśyanti te tattvaṃ buddhaśāsane// (XV.6). Furthermore, it is incoherent to maintain that permanent *dharma*-s with a self-nature constitute wholes that are impermanent and mere designations, because there must be a connection between the two such that like should give rise to like. "It is not tenable [to assert] that that which depends on something else is different from it". yatpratītya ca yattasmāttadanyannopapadyate// (XIV.5)

[18]Bhikkhu Bodhi (1993:4).

addresses the Vaiśeṣika view of truly existent particles.[19] His method is similar to that in the MAL.

Āryadeva shows the absurdity of asserting that particles are partless since they are acknowledged to be material and thus have the qualities of matter, e.g. they occupy three-dimensional space, have sides and can move. He employs a *prasaṅga* argument to turn the following assertion on its head: "gross objects [i.e. wholes] would not exist if the particles that produced them did not exist; therefore particles exist."[20] But, responds Āryadeva, one observes that at the moment that B is produced by A, A ceases to exist, as in the case of a seed and a sprout; therefore the cause A is not permanent. So the logical need to posit the permanency of particles in order to avoid infinite regress cannot be coherently satisfied.

Āryadeva then dismisses the Vaibhāṣika and non-Buddhist assertion that subtle particles can be perceived. This is an important assertion, of course, because if they *can* be perceived it can be argued that in some sense they must exist. Āryadeva's refutation rests on logic alone, not on empirical corroboration. If, he states, particles have no sides, no front, middle or rear, then this means they must be immaterial and therefore *by definition* invisible since the object that corresponds to the visual sense organ is form.[21] If particles are immaterial, how can they possibly be seen? It follows that empirical knowledge of partless particles is impossible. The argument thus exhausts both possibilities, knowledge of particles through sense perception and knowledge by inference.

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[19]See rGyal tshab's commentary on CS verses 212-219, in Ruth Sonam (1994:208-211).
[20]CS 218: "The effect destroys the cause, therefore the cause is not permanent. Alternatively, where the cause exists, the effect does not." ibid., p.210. Transl. Ruth Sonam. 'bras bu yis ni rgyu bshig pa// des na rgyu ni rtag ma yin// yang na gang na rgyu yod pa// de na 'bras bu yod ma yin//
[21]CS 217: "That which does not have a front, nor a middle, and which does not have a rear, being invisible, who will see it?" ibid., p.210. gang la dang po yod min zhing// gang zhig la dkyil yod min la// gang la tha ma yod min pa// mngon med de ni gang gis mthong//

Āryadeva further links the question of particles to the classic debate about fire and fuel.[22] If one maintains that particles are unitary, then a substantial truly existent fire particle would contain only fire and not the other elements, and this would imply that fire exists without fuel. The implication is that fire can exist uncaused. This idea is untenable for all Buddhist schools.

Śāntarakṣita's own detailed refutation of particles is found in the TS,[23] where the main points are the same as in the MAL. His refutation is part of a broader argument seeking to prove that if particles do not exist, then composite entities do not exist either. Firstly, he asserts that particles must occupy discrete spaces if one is to account for the existence of large objects, such as a hill, which indicate three-dimensional aggregations of particles. If this is the case, and if, as the opponent admits, particles exist (somehow) in conjunction with other particles, then it must be acknowledged that particles have several parts and are not unitary. He concludes that if particles are not one they cannot be many, that if something is neither one nor many it cannot exist at all, and if particles do not exist then neither can composite entities that are said to be composed of particles. In a curious way, therefore, Śāntarakṣita argues exactly the reverse of the Abhidharma. That proves the non-inherent existence of wholes by showing that they have parts, while Śāntarakṣita proves the non-inherent existence of wholes by showing that they do not have parts. The critical difference between these two approaches rests on the fact that they are each refuting different types of whole. The Abhidharma refutation succeeds against substance- or substrata-based wholes, whereas Śāntarakṣita's refutation attacks aggregates and bundles.

Furthermore, Śāntarakṣita asserts that partless particles cannot be apprehended by human

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[22]CS 343. If the particle has no fuel, [then] fire exists without fuel. If it does have fuel, the particle does not have a unitary nature. gal te rdul la shing med na// des na shing med me yod do// gal te de la shing yod na// gcig gi bdag can rdul yod min//

[23]TS and TSP 1989-1998.

perception.[24] If particles were perceptible then one of two options would hold. 1) Objects would be perceived as non-different to particles; but this is clearly not the case because objects are perceived as gross objects not as particles. 2) Objects would be perceived in the form of gross objects but composed of particles; this is not the case either, because although the form of the gross object is perceived the particles are not. The perceptibility of particles is therefore refuted for lack of empirical evidence. It is absurd to hold that something is perceptible when nobody perceives it. This argument is significant only because it assumes a position of strong substantival idealism which holds that to be a thing or entity is to be discerned or perceived.[25] For a thing to exist it must be accessible to cognition. *Esse est percipi.* To prove it is imperceptible is to prove it does not exist.

The Madhyamaka argument on particles rests on two other fundamental premises. First, matter and mind are characteristically distinct, the material being three-dimensionally extensive and the mental not being so. The argument on particles would fall were matter to be defined otherwise. And second, it rests on the principle that partless particles are not perceptible. Today, however, it could be argued that such entities *are* perceptible by means of microscopes, electron microscopes and other instruments, and this development invalidates the refutation. In the light of modern physics, the arguments justifying partless particles and the arguments refuting them need to be revised and re-expressed to take account of modifications in these two basic premises.

VII.3.3 The Cittamātra refutation

A classic Cittamātra refutation of the existence of particles is that of Vasubandhu's *Viṃśatikākārikā (Twenty Verses)* and its *vṛtti.*[26] This work sets out to prove the thesis that the

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[24]TS and TSP 1968-69.
[25]'Idealism' by Nicholas Rescher, in *A Companion to Epistemology*, ed. Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, pp.187-191.
[26]See Anacker (1984:161ff). The Sanskrit text is reproduced on pages 413-421.

three realms of existence are mind only *(cittamātra)* so the significance of his refutation of particles must be seen in this context. Vasubandhu demonstrates that the very notion of wholes and parts is absurd. Substance-based concepts of wholes where the substance is a unity (a view held by the Vaiśeṣikas) are untenable because such unitary substances have never been perceived as entities separate from their component parts. Wholes are not multiple either insofar as the numerous particles which compose them are never perceived singly. And wholes are not aggregates of particles because the existence of partless particles cannot be demonstrated.[27] In modern terminology, Vasubandhu refutes substance-based wholes, aggregates and bundles at a stroke.

Vasubandhu's argument, however, is not a general one because as soon as it is introduced in verse 11[28], it is specifically applied to perception. Rather than speaking of 'external objects', or 'entities', Vasubandhu refers to 'sense objects' *(viṣayaḥ)* immediately giving the refutation an epistemological slant. It emerges that perceptibility is a key criterion for determining the tenability of anything's existence. The arguments he uses subsequently are similar to those in the MAL and the TS: they address the questions of conjunction between particles, aggregates of particles occupying a larger space than individual particles, and the logic of particles having a number of directional sides. His conclusion places the interest once more in the domain of epistemology.[29] If entities were unitary, he argues, then absolute identity and absolute difference between entities would be established. But if this were true, any gradual action or movement or evolution of species would be impossible. Absolute difference implies difference in characteristics, which in turn implies

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[27]Vasubandhu's *vṛtti* on verse 11 in Anacker (1984:167).

[28]na tadekaṃ na cānekaṃ viṣayaḥ paramāṇuśaḥ/ na ca te saṁhatā yasmātparamāṇurna sidhyati// A sense object is neither a single thing, nor many things from the point of view of particles, nor is it an aggregate [of particles], so particles cannot be proved.

[29]If their unity existed, one could not arrive at anything gradually, there could not be apprehension and non-apprehension simultaneously, there could not be separate, several developments, and there would be no reason for the non-seeing of the very subtle. Verse 15. Transl. Anacker, op.cit., p.169-170.

differences between particles. Particles can therefore not be of one kind so a form of association between different types of particles would have to be admitted, with the implications already seen. Therefore, as they have not been shown to be unitary, it follows that neither sense objects nor their sense organs can be established as different, that is, they cannot be shown to be independently existing, distinct entities. What is established instead is perception-only.

The nature of this reasoning is arguably both ontological *and* epistemological. It is ontological in the sense that it proves that neither particles nor material objects truly exist, and it is epistemological in the sense that it demonstrates that neither the objective nor the subjective components of sense perception truly exist, and that, as a result, it is not possible to apprehend an external world. External objects cannot be established so we can not assume that knowledge is derived from a perceptual given. Thus far, the argument refutes externality in favour of two forms of idealism. Firstly, Vasubandhu subscribes to strong substantival idealism[30] just as we saw previously is also the case in Madhyamaka. If a thing exists, it must in principle be accessible to cognition. He uses this version of epistemic idealism to refute all types of whole. And secondly, he concludes with the most radical ontological version of idealism, which holds that minds and their thoughts are all there is. If the object of knowledge is not material it can only be mental, and from this the inference is made that there can exist nothing other than mind. Perception and cognition occur as in a dream.

The Cittamātra view is characterized by dBus pa blo gsal as follows: "[They assert] that all phenomena are of the nature of mind only."[31] Similarly, dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang

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[30]Nicholas Rescher, op.cit.

[31]chos kun rnam rig tsam nyid du ...gsungs// bLo gsal grub mtha', XI-1ab, in Mimaki (1982:95).

po defines a proponent of Cittamātra as "a person propounding Buddhist tenets who... does not assert external objects."[32]

External objects are defined by Sopa and Hopkins (ibid.) as objects that are different entities from the consciousness apprehending them. The Cittamātrin refutation of external objects denies that objects are different entities from the minds that apprehend them, and therefore entails that forms and so forth are the same entity as the consciousness that perceives them. The sense object and associated sense consciousness are both produced from a single predisposition contained within the mind. The Cittamātrin position entails that there is no perceptual given. dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po goes on to explain that both subschools of Cittamātra are similar in asserting that blue appears as a gross object to an eye consciousness apprehending blue, and that blue falsely appears to be an external object.[33] Even to a non-defective sense consciousness, objects appear *as though* they were external when they are not. Both subject and object are produced from a latent predisposition within the mind, fulfilling the third feature of radical ontological idealism which is the reality of the mind itself.

VII.3.3 Śāntaraksita's argument and its interpretation by Mi pham

The main point made in the MAL can be summarised thus: if a partless particle combines (in whatever way this is understood[34]) with a number of other particles to constitute coarse particles and gross objects, then it follows that the partless particle cannot be spatially unitary or spatially partless, since it requires a number of facets each linking

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[32]Sopa and Hopkins (1989:249).
[33]ibid., p.251-2.
[34]The three different theories mentioned by Śāntarakṣita regarding how particles combine were each upheld by separate schools: the Nyāya school maintained that particles must meet in order to combine; the Vaiśeṣikas and the Vaibhāṣikas of Kashmir (AKB i.43d) claimed that they are merely surrounded by other particles, with space in-between; the Sautrāntikas (AKB i.43d) asserted that particles are merely contiguous, and juxtaposed without interval.

with a corresponding number of other particles. No two particles can occupy the same space. This principle is necessary to account for the existence of large objects which are more extensive than any single particle. The argument is straightforward and shows the absurdity of asserting that partless particles are constitutive of matter.

Faced with such a radical conclusion, how does Śāntarakṣita account for the existence of the known world? In his commentary on verse 15, Mi pham explains Śāntarakṣita's position in the light of the Mādhyamika interpretation of interdependent origination.[35]

> *(On account of this[36]), these particles are asserted to exist co-emergently with the entities [they compose]. Since these [particles] do not exist, all those [entities] that are related [to them] will also be devoid of existence since they are rooted in the particles.*[37]

Rather than maintaining a diachronic explanation of causality, where a particle at t_1 combines with other particles at t_2 to form a composite object at t_3, and where, conversely, analysis can trace the process backwards by reduction, Mādhyamikas instead envision the synchronous co-emergence of all relevant factors moment after moment, implying that both particles and the entities they compose are impermanent and have the same non-inherent (i.e. without *svabhāva*) but dynamic existence.[38] The crucial consequence of this reasoning, continues Mi pham, is that if sense objects, and the senses themselves do not exist inherently, then neither does the knowing consciousness. Sense consciousnesses and the mental consciousness are said by Buddhists to arise as a result of the coming together of objects and senses, and if these two lack *svabhāva* then so does the

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[35]See Murti (1960:132-140) for a review of how the dialectical Mādhyamika method analyses causality.
[36]Mi pham has previously reviewed the first three lines of verse 15.
[37]C. p.190. Mi pham's references to the MAL are in bold. rdul **de dag** cig shos kyi dngos po **de dang** lhan cig **'du ba can** yang yin par 'dod pa de'i phyir de med pas de la dngos sam brgyud pas 'brel ba de rnams kyang rdul phran gyi rtsa ba can yin pas na med par 'gyur te/
[38]Nāgārjuna, in particular, refuted the coherence of any theory of diachronic causation that asserts that an entity *x* is produced by one or more different entities *y* and *z*, such that *y* and *z* exist prior to the existence of *x*. In technical terms, he attacked 'production from other'. In MMK I.1 he wrote: "Neither from itself, nor from another, nor from both, nor without a cause, does anything whatsoever arise anywhere." na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyāṃ nāpyahetutaḥ/ utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kvacana ke cana//

consciousness they produce.[39] This implies that there is no ultimate truth to perception-based cognition. All externalist assertions—whichever category of phenomena they relate to—are therefore destroyed at a stroke. Mi pham concludes:

> *In short, if one investigates thoroughly, by virtue of the interdependent origination of cognition and the cognized, one will realize that if particles are not established then matter is not established, [and] it follows that mind* (sems) *is not established either. Finally, this [insight] is capable of destroying attachment to the true [existence] of any phenomenon whatsoever. When, for example, any one of the twigs in a bundle is pulled out, the others will no [longer remain] close-knit, but will gradually scatter.*[40]

Rather than interpreting the verses in terms of a refutation of Abhidharma and Vaiśeṣika ontology, Mi pham considers that Śāntarakṣita's argument concerns the process of cognition, and effectively interprets it as a bridge between the earlier verses and the following section (v.16-61) which deals explicitly with cognition and the nature of consciousness. Interestingly, Mi pham likens cognition to a whole in the sense of a bundle. On the Buddhist view, cognition can be considered a bundle made of a combination of material and mental parts (sense objects, sense organs and sense consciousnesses in Sautrāntika, for example). When any one of these parts is eliminated, the bundle disintegrates. But is Mi pham reading too much into the text? What evidence is there that Śāntarakṣita had epistemology in mind? The conclusion of the corresponding passage of the *vṛtti*[41], on which, incidentally, Mi pham's commentary is very largely based, is as follows:

> **By eliminating the [true existence of] permanent entities [such as] space, time, direction, the self, and subtle particles, it has been shown first that [nothing has] an intrinsic nature.**
> *rtag pa'i dngos po nam mkha' dang dus dang phyogs dang bdag dang phra rab dag kyang bsal te/ rang bzhin med par sngar bstan zin to//*[42]

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[39]In the causal account of cognition common to the Vaibhāṣikas and Theravādins, cognitive events involving the physical senses occur when four factors come together: the sense organ; the appropriate object; the appropriate physical elements (light, space, air, water and earth for seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching respectively); and attention *(manasikāra)*. See Bhikkhu Bodhi (1993:151-2 ff.). The Vijñānavādin account is very different since it accepts this analysis specifically at the phenomenal level but not in any ultimate sense.

[40]C. p.192. mdor na legs par dpyad na shes dang shes bya phan tshun rten 'brel du gyur pa'i gnad kyis rdul ma grub pas bem po mi 'grub la/ des sems kyang bden par grub pa med par shes shing mthar chos kun la'ang bden pa'i zhen pa 'jig nus te/ dper na lcug phran kyi phon po las gang yang rung ba zhig phyung bas gzhan mi brtan zhing rim gyis 'thor 'gro ba bzhin no//

[41]Ichigō (1985:66). MALV P.56b.

[42]ibid.

The way Śāntarakṣita couches his conclusion indicates that the issue at stake is ontological, not epistemological. There is no sign in the MAL or the *vṛtti* that Śāntarakṣita was following in the line of Vasubandhu's style of analysis. If Śāntarakṣita had lived earlier, one could account for the discrepancy by saying that epistemological issues had not risen to the fore, and scholars were still focused on ontology. But this is hardly the case, because the bulk of the MAL is devoted to the mind and the process of cognition, so it is quite clear that Śāntarakṣita was keenly aware of the importance of epistemology. One cannot attribute Mi pham's interpretation merely to the fact that he lived a thousand years later. The position we will defend here is that Mi pham's understanding of the MAL is accurate insofar as it points to the *implicit* logic between verse 15 and verse 16. This is indeed a similar logic to that used first in the *Viṃśatikākārikā* and then in the TS. In all three works, the argument proceeds from showing that particles do not truly exist, to showing that coarse material objects do not truly exist, to the application of this to the perception process, to the conclusion that since the mind does not apprehend external objects, if knowledge is to make sense at all the mind must be self-aware *(svasaṃvedana; rang rig)*. Although Śāntarakṣita may not use Cittamātrin or epistemological terminology he does follow the steps of Vasubandhu's logic.

This is the reasoning *par excellence* which literally serves as the bridge between ontology and epistemology. It is not simply Mi pham or Vasubandhu who have chosen to make this link; the connection between these two domains is inherent in the logical progression. Ontology has implications for epistemology. But does it? The point is that Śāntarakṣita does not draw the same conclusions from this reasoning as Vasubandhu does. In fact he makes it quite clear that he does *not* subscribe to a radical ontological version of idealism by inserting the first two lines of verse 16 between the refutation of partless particles and

the assertion that mind is self-aware. These two lines posit the irreducibility of mind and matter, thus anticipating any interpretation of his refutation as being motivated by idealism of an immaterialist variety.

VII.4 A critical assessment

All Buddhist schools are characterized by one shade of idealism or another. Both Theravādins[43] and Mādhyamikas[44], for example, share common ground in asserting that gross objects are merely designated to a series of cognitions and their reality is imputed *(prajñāptisat)*, being formed by patterns of the human mind. In other words, their standpoint is a form of conceptual idealism where reality is understood in terms of our mental categories and tendencies. Mahāyānists extend this position so it applies not just to wholes but to all objects of knowledge. Furthermore, Mahāyānists (but not Sautrāntikas) espouse strong substantival idealism, asserting that whatever exists must be discerned. We have seen evidence that Śāntarakṣita holds both these views. Ironically, Buddhists share the latter form of epistemic idealism with the realist opponents they seek to refute. They set out to attack both scholastic realism—the position that real things just exactly are things as philosophy takes them to be—and naive realism, where real things just exactly are things as commonsense takes them to be. Both these forms of realism see reals as inherently knowable and do not envisage a reality that transcends or otherwise eludes the mind. Such realists therefore share the substantival idealism of Buddhists.

As for Śāntarakṣita's position with regard to ontological idealism, this must be considered in the light of his view of external entities i) ultimately and ii) conventionally. Verse 92 of

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[43]*Milindapañha* I.1.

[44]TS 1972. "Just as in the case of the coming into existence of similar moments, there is an illusion of permanence, so when there is an unbroken series of cognitions of similar atoms, there is an illusion of grossness."

the MAL defines his position with regard to the ultimate reality of the external world.

> **Based on the standpoint of Cittamātra, one must know that external entities do not [truly] exist.**
> *sems tsam la ni brten nas su// phyi rol dngos med shes par bya//*

So external entities are empty *(stong pa)* of independent existence ultimately. But what of their conventional existence? According to the *blo gsal grub mtha'* Śāntarakṣita is not an idealist in the sense of Cittamātra.

> *The scholar Śāntarakṣita, the scholar Haribhadra, and their followers assert that appearances such as forms and so on, mind and mental events, the objects [perceived in] dreams, and so forth, [are accepted] in relative truth.*[45]

It is dBus pa blo gsal's view that Śāntarakṣita accepts the conventional existence of the material world. In this case, he is following the Madhyamaka approach rather than the Cittamātra one. Cittamātrins deny the existence of external reality on both the ultimate and conventional levels, but Mādhyamikas refute the external world on the ultimate level and accept its existence on the relative level.[46] They do not deny the material world of empirical experience. The evidence for dBus pa blo gsal's view is MAL 64 where Śāntarakṣita defines relative truth:

> **One should understand that the nature of relative [truth] is (1) that which is delightful only as long as it is not investigated critically; (2) that which is subject to arising and decay; and (3) that which has causal efficiency.**
> *ma brtags gcig pu nyams dga' zhin// skye dang 'jig pa'i chos can pa//*
> *don byed pa dag nus rnams kyi// rang bzhin kun rdzob pa yin rtogs/*

Relative truth is the domain of impermanent phenomena subject to causation.[47] But he

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[45]See Mimaki (1982:166-7). slob dpon zhi ba 'tsho dang slob dpon seng ge bzang po la sogs pa ni gzugs la sogs par snang ba dang sems dang sems las byung ba dang rmi lam gyi yul la sogs pa yang yang dag pa'i kun rdzob tu bzhed de/

[46]The definition of a proponent of the Madhyamaka school given in the *grub mtha'* of dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po (Sopa and Hopkins, 1989:279-280) is a person propounding Buddhist tenets who asserts that there are no truly existent phenomena, not even particles. However, "the refutation of true existence does not mean that things actually do not exist; rather, they seem to be their own mode of subsistence whereas they are not, and thus are falsely established." This definition applies to both Svātantrikas and to Prāsaṅgikas. However, there are differences in the way Prāsaṅgikas and Svātantrikas respectively accept conventional existence and these are discussed in Chapter IX.

[47]Ichigō (1985:LXI-LXVI).

also explains that relative truth has the nature of cognition and mental states.[48] In verse 91 he asserts:

> **That which is cause and effect is nothing but mind-only. It is established that knowledge is that which is self-validated.**
> *rgyu dang 'bras bur gyur pa yang// shes pa 'ba zhig kho na ste//*
> *rang gis grub pa gang yin pa// de ni shes par gnas pa yin//*

To explain causation Śāntarakṣita does not follow Cittamātra insofar as causes are not all held to be mental in nature.

> **[65] Even that which is agreeable and acceptable as long as it is not investigated critically implies the production of similar successive effects conditioned by their own successive causes.**
> *brtags pa ma byas nyams dga' ba'ang// bdag rgyu snga ma snga ma la//*
> *brten nas phyi ma phyi ma yi// 'bras bu de 'dra 'byung ba yin//*
>
> **[66] Therefore, [for an opponent to say] "if relative [existence] has no [truly existing] cause, it could not exist [at all]"—that won't do. If there is a truly existing [cause] that expropriates [the relative], tell [me] what it is!**
> *de phyir kun rdzob rgyu med na// rung min zhes pa'ang legs ma yin//*
> *gal te 'di yi nyer len pa// yang dag yin na de smros shig//*

Śāntarakṣita asserts that the cause of relative phenomena is the individual series of moments arising from a beginningless past, the implication being that there can be material series and mental series. The cause is not an inherently existent substratum. Similarly, Kamalaśīla asserts:

> *...we claim that the cause of relative phenomena is a beginningless [series of] successive causes.*[49]

So dBus pa blo gsal is correct in claiming that Śāntarakṣita believes in the relative existence of external reality. Further evidence for this is in verse 16:

> **Consciousness arises as [that which is] intrinsically opposed to the nature of matter...**
> *rnam shes bems po'i rang bzhin las// bzlog pa rab tu skye ba ste//*

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[48]MALV P. 78b2-3.
[49]MALP P. 122b8-123a1.

This verse asserts that matter is distinct from the mind. Mind is that which is self-aware, and matter is that which is not self-aware. Mind and matter are opposites, and cannot be reduced the one to the other. The verse thus corroborates the view of dBus pa blo gsal, that both (material) forms and mind have relative existence for Śāntarakṣita. It follows that in relative truth there can be a perceptual given, and there can be both object and subject, cognized and cognizer. But what is the nature of the cognized? Let us compare verse 16 with the *vṛtti* on verse 91. In this passage, Śāntarakṣita explains that the bifurcation of Madhyamaka into Yogācāra-Madhyamaka and Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka was the result of their differing views concerning what exists in relative truth.

> *One cannot conceive of the nature of knowledge as something other than its being established by itself. This nature of knowledge that is self-validated is just like the form of a dream, an illusion and so forth.*[50]

Bhāvaviveka, on the other hand, maintains that relative truth has the nature of an external entity whereas Śāntarakṣita does not admit the existence of an object external to the mind.

> ***One cannot conceive of the nature of knowledge as something other than its being established by itself. This nature of knowledge that is self-validated is just like the form of a dream, an illusion and the like.***
> rang gis grub pa'i ngo bo bor nas shes pa'i ngo bo gzhan rtog pa med do// rang gis grub pa'i rang bzhin yang rmi lam dang sgyu ma la sogs pa'i gzugs bzhin no//[51]

That which lies in the domain of cause and effect is called relative, and the relative is ultimately nothing but mind-only. Both matter and mind exist in dualistic opposition on the relative level, but ultimately neither matter nor mind exists. Conventionally we can account for the empirical world by referring to matter and to cognizing minds, but this is an understanding that has not been analysed or investigated from the ultimate point of view (one of the three features of relative truth defined in MAL 64), and it is in fact erroneous. If we ascribe our perceptions to external objects we are deluded. Nevertheless,

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[50]P.78b, 4-5 (Ichigō, 1985:292-294). rang gis grub pa'i ngo bo bor nas shes pa'i ngo bo gzhan rtog pas med do// rang gis grub pa'i rang bzhin yang rmi lam dang sgyu ma la sogs pa'i gzugs bzhin no//
[51]MALV P.78b, 4-5. (Ichigō, 1985:292-294).

it is not denied that deluded beings do just this. But once one comes to analyse the relative in order to identify the ultimate nature of causation then one can only conclude, says Śāntarakṣita, that everything is but mind-only.

It is still not clear, however, whether Śāntarakṣita's acceptance of matter on the relative level actually entails an ontological commitment. If it does, this might mean that the entities he refutes are subjects *(chos can)* that appear in common *(mthun snang ba)* to both parties in the debate, that is to both himself and his opponents. In order to explore this further, one needs to distinguish between externalist accounts of perception, such as that of the Sautrāntikas, which infer the external existence of objects, and internalist accounts of perception such as those put forward by the Yogācāra schools, which do not. This is what Śāntarakṣita proceeds to do in verses 16-61. The results of his analysis will therefore determine, *inter alia,* how one defines him as a Svātantrika, and will be evaluated in Chapter IX.

So what *are* the implications of his refutation of the material world for the nature and existence of consciousness? Although Mi pham points out that the interdependence of cognizer and cognized signifies that neither has an intrinsic nature, if Śāntarakṣita had succeeded in refuting the existence of the mind here he would have had no need to engage in the detailed discussion of verses 16-61. What is implied by Mi pham is that the refutation in verses 11-15 includes a refutation of the *intentional* consciousness, that is, the consciousness that knows objects, or, to put it another way, the consciousness that arises in co-dependence upon an object of cognition.[52] Within the Abhidharma framework, this refers to the mental consciousness *(mano; sems)*, being both the consciousness that per-

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[52]The Theravādins, like the Sarvāstivādins, considered that consciousness is always intentional. In his *Atthasālinī*, Buddhaghosa asserts that consciousness may arise without adverting *(āvajjana)* attention but not without objective support *(ārammaṇa)*: vinā hi āvajjanena cittaṃ uppajjati, ārammaṇena pana vinā n'uppajjatī ti (PTS, p.278).

ceives thoughts as its designated objects, and that which coordinates data from the five sense consciousnesses.[53] We have already considered the Vaibhāṣika view of the intentionality of consciousness in the discussion on cessation in Chapter VI. As Paul Williams (1981:230) explains, "philosophically the Sarvāstivādin doctrine was essentially built on the intentionality of consciousness, the theory that all consciousness must be conscious of something". Śāntarakṣita's implied refutation of its existence at this point of the MAL is entirely consonant with the fact that he is addressing the existence of external objects, for such a theory of consciousness, and of cognition, entails an *a priori* assumption that the intentional object must exist (Williams, ibid.).

What Śāntarakṣita has specifically *not* refuted thus far is the existence of any mode of consciousness that is not intentional. But in addition, he has not refuted any type of cognition based on the existence of an intentional consciousness whose objects of knowledge are mental in nature (and not defined as external). In other words, he has not addressed at all the analysis of the mind presented by Cittamātra in which both these options are asserted. In order to examine this important and thorny question thoroughly, he devotes the remainder of his analysis to the processes of cognition and perception.

The conclusion drawn by Cittamātrins from the refutation of particles is that there can be nothing other than perception-only. Their position is one of strong idealism in the sense

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[53]See David J. Kalupahana, *The Principles of Buddhist Psychology*, SUNY, 1987, especially pp. 29-31, for another Theravādin analysis. "*Mano* is a specific faculty with *dhammā* [concepts] as its object, whereas *viññāṇa* represents experience based upon all six faculties and their six objects...Yet *mano* has a very specific function which is not shared by any of the other faculties and, therefore, adds a special element to consciousness or experience. It consists of the ability to survey the fields *(gocara)* or the objects of the other senses...This reflective faculty is also the source of the sense of personal identity or the conception of self... It may be noted that *mano* is never described as having continuity, while *viññāṇa* is sometimes referred to as an unbroken stream *(abbocchinnaṃ viññāṇasotam)*.

In the AKB i.16d, Vasubandhu clarifies the distinction between the two functions of *mano* by designating them with two different terms: *manovijñāna(dhātu)* refers to the mind that apprehends concepts as its object while *manodhātu* or *manas* refers to the mental function of coordinating the sense consciousnesses and acting as their support. Indeed, *manas* also acts as a support for *manovijñāna* (AKB i.17c-d).

that it entails three things: knowledge is creative such that the world we know is imaginary *(parikalpita)*; there is nothing given in perception because all knowledge ultimately comes from the mind knowing itself; and creative knowledge itself is real.[54] The external world does not exist either in ultimate or in relative truth.

The problem with the Cittamātrin position is that the mere refutation of the true existence of external objects does not necessarily entail such strong conclusions and is not sufficient to render a philosopher an idealist.[55] To say that the realist's contention is unwarranted is one thing, but to conclude from this that idealism is established is another. From the assertion that the external world is unknowable we cannot infer that it does not exist at all. We can say that its existence cannot be known, but it is not valid to deduce from this that because it is unknown and unestablished it must be non-existent. Further arguments are needed to make this connection, such as arguments that show that phenomena depend by their very nature on the consciousness that apprehends them. That the claim of strong substantival idealism is not a necessary entailment of the refutation of the material world is exemplified by Mādhyamikas who make this refutation without falling under that idealist label. That is Śāntarakṣita's project.

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[54]*The Yogācāra Idealism* by A.K. Chatterjee, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1962, p.*x*.
[55]Chatterjee (1962:48-9).

CHAPTER EIGHT THE NATURE OF COGNITION

VIII.1 Introduction

One of the chief innovations of the MAL is its detailed analysis of cognition in verses 16-61. In-depth philosophical analysis of the cognitive mechanisms of the mind is characteristic of Yogācāra treatises such as Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, and Sthiramati's *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā*. Yogācāra is concerned first and foremost with the nature, development and workings of the mind because it considers the mind so essential to the meditative process.[1] But Madhyamaka treatises authored before Śāntarakṣita do not address detailed questions of epistemology. Although Jñānagarbha introduced epistemological questions into the SDV he did not address the cognition process systematically. This discussion is therefore a prime example of the way Śāntarakṣita brought Yogācāra and Madhyamaka together in the MAL. While the topical content of the analysis is typical of Yogācāra, the logical approach (i.e. the neither one nor many argument) is typical of Madhyamaka. Śāntarakṣita's own awareness of how innovative this was may be one of the reasons for the length of his discussion since nothing similar had ever been presented in such a context before. He was breaking new ground, both in the history of Mahāyāna treatises in India and in the development of his own personal thinking.

The discussion on cognition contrasts markedly with the preceding verses considered in Chapters V-VII, in the sense that it *is* so detailed and explicit. This is partly what justifies the interest of the text for a modern reader for similar epistemological issues are debated in contemporary philosophy. Śāntarakṣita may have been innovative within his own historical context, but since his time the questions he raised have become standard

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[1] *On Knowing Reality* by Janice Dean Willis, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1982, pp.29ff.

nourishment for Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophers the world over—questions on the relation between matter and mind specifically object and mind, object and image, and image and mind. It explains why for Mi pham, the interest of the MAL on cognition is of a different order: he believes the epistemological views expressed by Śāntarakṣita are important because they represent the view of the rNying ma school. Over and over again in his commentary, he mentions that Śāntarakṣita's position (on Mi pham's interpretation, of course) is identical to that of the rNying ma school. According to Mi pham and to contemporary rNying ma scholars such as mKhan chen Pad ma shes rab, the MAL presents the basis of what has since become the rNying ma view of the mind and cognition. It is not at all clear that such a thing exists at all—that is, a single view that is adhered to by all exponents of the rNying ma tradition.[2] However, insofar as Mi pham composed textbooks for the rNying ma tradition *(rang lugs kyi yig cha)* at the request of 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po, his views are regarded as authoritative by contemporary rNying ma pas.[3]

This rNying ma view of cognition differs from prevailing dGe lugs pa views on a number of points. Its interest for modern scholarship therefore lies in the fact that it represents an alternative understanding of Buddhist epistemology to those with which most scholars are familiar. The present study is therefore one of the few English-language presentations of a rNying ma approach to cognition in the context of Madhyamaka rather than of rDzogs chen.[4] The exercise of comparing and evaluating rNying ma and dGe lugs epistemology systematically is an enormous task in itself requiring specific methods and sources, so it is

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[2]See Pettit (1997:99). Pettit shows that what unites rNying ma pas is their adherence to a core of received Vajrayāna texts and to the view of rDzogs chen as ultimate. But it is precisely in the area of Madhyamaka exegesis that interpretations within the tradition are diverse.

[3]ibid.

[4]Those works of kLong chen pa that are translated and studied in the English language are primarily rDzogs chen works: e.g. the *Ngal gso skor gsum* translated by Herbert V. Guenther as *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, vols. I-III. This is partly due to the fact that the greater part of kLong chen pa's Madhyamaka works are now lost. However, one presentation of the rNying ma approach that deserves special attention is Kennard Lipman's translation of the first chapter of kLong chen pa's *Yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod* in *Crystal Mirror V*, pp.344-364. For a rNying ma and rDzog chen study of the mind and cognition see *From Reductionism to Creativity —rDzogs chen and the New Sciences of Mind* by H. Guenther, Shambhala, Boston, 1989, pp.189-243.

beyond the scope of this study and requires further research. This Chapter will simply examine Śāntarakṣita's arguments on cognition with reference to Mi pham's commentary. Certain points that gave rise to divergent views in India or Tibet will be identified and examined in more detail. Śāntarakṣita's view of cognition will then be critically appraised.

VIII.2 Debates on cognition: an overview

VIII.2.1 Externalist and internalist positions

In his commentary on verse 16 of the MAL, Mi pham presents an overview of the various theories on mind and cognition held by different Indian schools, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist.[5] This section of our study will draw from Mi pham's commentary in order to introduce the issues raised while at the same time broadly relating these to Western philosophical theories of the mind and cognition, thereby laying the terminological and conceptual foundations for a critical appraisal of Śāntarakṣita's view.

In analysing the process of cognition and the nature of consciousness, the first distinction we can make is that between externalists and internalists. We call externalists those who assert the existence of external objects such that external objects are independent of any mind that cognizes them, and of a different nature to that of the minds that cognize them. And we call internalists those who hold that objects of cognition are necessarily mental in nature; cognition is a process internal to the mind. The model of cognition associated with externalism is one that posits some form of relation between subject and object, and between mind and matter. (It is not necessarily a dualist stance; externalist models of cognition could be associated with physicalist or supervenience theories of mind.) In the Buddhist context, there are two possible views in externalism: 1) the view that asserts that

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[5]For another overview of Buddhist epistemologies, see 'Saṁvṛti and Paramārtha in Yogācāra according to Tibetan sources' by H. Guenther, in *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*, ed. Mervyn Sprung, 1973. The part of Mi pham's commentary that is referred to in the following section is found at C.p.194ff.

external objects are apprehended directly by the senses, with no intermediary; and 2) the view that what appears to perception is an image, aspect (*ākāra; rnam pa*) or mental representation of the object, not the object itself. The implication of this difference for knowledge is that in 1) it is possible to know reality directly, but in 2) real external objects are not perceived directly, and their existence can only be inferred.

VIII.2.2 Aspectless externalism

The view that we directly perceive objects in an external world, and apprehend them just exactly as they are, is called commonsense realism in Western philosophy. This is the view behind everyday expressions such as "I saw the vase with my own eyes". In the Indian context, this position was that of a number of schools including the Vaiśeṣikas and the Vaibhāṣikas. Mi pham explains:

> *[The Vaiśeṣikas] assert that external objects exist, and that they are perceived by the sense faculties. The consciousness is like a crystal sphere, and does not apprehend any of the objects' features.*[6]

Proponents of this view think that objects are apprehended directly and nakedly, just as they are. This means that if a hundred people look at a vase, they all see just exactly that single vase. Perception cannot be mistaken unless the sense organs are defective. But Mipham explains that the Sautrāntikas criticize this view on a number of counts.[7] Firstly, it is absurd to claim that cognition is an activity of the sense organs rather than the consciousness. Sense organs are material in nature, and matter is defined as that which is not aware. Only mind is defined as capable of awareness and cognition. Therefore the sense organs cannot possibly cognize objects. Secondly, although according to the aspectless externalist view objects are apprehended directly, in fact there must be a connecting link

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[6]C. p.194. phyi don yod kyang de dbang pos mthong ba yin gyi/ rnam shes ni shel sgong lta bu yul gyi rnam pa mi 'dzin par 'dod de/
[7]C. p.195.

between subject and object. For cognition to take place, there must be a relation between object and subject. This is not accounted for in the Vaibhāṣika theory (and in modern-day theories that do attempt to account for such a link, the issue is invariably problematic). Thirdly, if matter and mind are posited as opposites (verse 16 of the MAL), it follows that cognition of external material objects is impossible. The object of cognition must be of the same nature as the cognizing consciousness; how else could they be related? Finally, if it were correct to maintain that external objects are apprehended just exactly as they are then one hundred people looking at a vase would each see exactly the same thing; but experience tells us that owing to their respective angles of vision, and so on, what each actually perceives is unique. The conclusion is that if we want to posit external objects, the only way of making sense of cognition is to accept aspects in perception.

VIII.2.3 Externalism endowed with aspects

The Buddhist Sautrāntika school urges an externalist model of cognition endowed with aspects. Sautrāntikas hold that what is perceived is an aspect *(rnam pa; ākāra)* of the object, not the object itself. In inferring that such an image must be produced by an un-perceived object, they hold that the external object must exist in exactly the way the aspect appears.[8] The example given is the way the images of objects appear in a mirror. This correspondence principle therefore guarantees the validity of knowledge. At the same time, the Sautrāntikas admit that the aspect an object casts in my mind must be different from the aspect it casts in anyone else's mind, so that perception is exclusive to a particular mental continuum. Finally, they explain delusion as the mistaken belief that what is perceived is the object itself when it is only a representation of it.

Our belief leads us to take the perceived world for the real world. In fact reality always

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[8]C p.196. rnam pa de la ji yod pa ma lhag ma chad par phyi rol la'ang yod dgos la/

remains hidden, concealed behind the aspects as it were, and beyond our direct apprehension. Reality can only be known by inference. Furthermore, cognition is a faculty of the consciousness and not of the sense organs. What is apprehended in cognition is mental in nature, while the external world remains different from it. On Mi pham's view, if external objects are asserted then the Sautrāntika theory is the best.

> *This is the approach of the externalists who hold that there is no [other] position that is better than [that of] aspected [cognition]. As long as external objects are asserted, there is no more appropriate position, so this system is very acceptable.*[9]

Mi pham[10] then dismisses a criticism levelled at the Sautrāntikas. The argument is that if it is asserted that external objects are never known directly, why is it justified to posit them at all? It would be logically possible to perceive things that do not exist, such as the form of formless spirits *(sha za)*, for how could we ever know for certain that the aspect in cognition *actually* corresponded to an external object and was not an hallucination? Critics of this persuasion suggest that the external object is directly perceived in a first moment, and that in subsequent moments reality is hidden by the image we have of it. That initial moment of direct perception secures the validity of knowledge. This theory was propounded by the Buddhist Logicians, who are sometimes considered to be Sautrāntikas.[11] Nevertheless, Mi pham urges that it reveals a misunderstanding of the Sautrāntika view.

> *Yet this [shows] an incomplete understanding of the Sautrāntika viewpoint. If there were an awareness of the actual object in the first moment, why would there not be [such] an awareness in the second moment, and so on? Although [the object] is hidden, the apprehended aspects are still those of that [object] and cannot be those of anything else. [Likewise,] although an actual form does not appear in a mirror, that which is directed towards the mirror appears there, and not just*

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[9]C p.196-7. phyi don dngos ni lkog na mo'i tshul te rnam pa de'i phag tu yib pa lta bu'i tshul gyis mthong ba med par 'dod/ lugs 'di phyi don yod par 'dod phan chad 'di ltar khas len pa las 'os med pas shin tu 'thad/
[10]C p.197.
[11]See Hattori (1968:93).

anything at random.[12]

Since cognition concerns the consciousness, the process of cognition must be explained in terms of series of moments of consciousness. And therefore, if there is a moment of direct perception this cannot stop abruptly and become something else, such as the apprehension of an image. That initial moment requires its own coherent series of subsequent moments. The Logicians' compromise does not work. In addition, it is a principle of the Sautrāntika view that there is a necessary and exact connection between the aspect and the object that produced the aspect, and this implies that no aspects could appear in the mind that had not been so produced. In other words, it is unreasonable to suppose that aspects can be produced at random or can arise without cause. The criticism is rejected on these grounds.

VIII.2.4 Internalist views of cognition

The externalist model of cognition endowed with aspects is very similar to the internalist model of cognition endowed with aspects, namely in the Buddhist context the theory of Cittamātra. The main difference between them, on Mi pham's view, lies simply in whether or not aspects in cognition are said to be produced by external objects.[13] Internalists refute the existence of external objects by way of 'the reasoning that refutes production' *(skyes la 'dra ba 'gog pa'i rig pa).*[14] They claim that it is unreasonable to assert that what appears in perception is produced by an external object. The mere presence of an aspect in cognition is not sufficient to establish the existence of an outer object. The logical inference that attempts to establish the link is uncertain, because there

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[12]C p.197. de la kha cig gis phyi don gtan nas ma snang na sha za sogs kyi rnam pa'ang cis mi 'dzin te/ bum pa dang sha za gnyis lkog gyur yin pa la khyad med pa'i phyir na skad cig dang po la phyi don snang zhing de phan chad lkog gyur yin ser kyang mdo sde pa'i grub mtha' gtan ma chub pa ste/ skad cig dang po la yul dngos su rig na gnyis pa sogs su'i'ang cis mi rig/ lkog gyur yin yang gang gi rnam pa gtad pa de'i rnam pa 'dzin pa las gzhan mi srid te/ me long gi nang du gzugs dngos shar ba nam yang mi srid kyang/ gang me long la phyogs pa de 'char ba las gang rung rung mi 'char ba bzhin no/

[13]C p.197.

[14]The overview of the Cittamātra position is taken from Mi pham's commentary on verse 44. C p.262ff.

are cases where it is commonly acknowledged that the image that appears to perception is not just exactly as the external object must be. One example of such a case is when a visually impaired person sees two moons. Such instances call into question the Sautrān-tika principle of an exact correspondence between aspects and the objects that produce them.[15]

Furthermore, Cittamātrins assert that subtle particles cannot be perceived and are therefore unestablished, and gross objects have been shown to be unestablished too. But their principal argument against the external world is one which establishes that the nature of all that appears in cognition is identical to the nature of consciousness.

> *The principal proof of [the fact that] apprehended and apprehender are not different is the argument that all appearances have the essence of clear and aware consciousness. [This] is established through the certainty of simultaneous observation. Regarding that [certainty], the valid cognition observes the object blue simultaneously with the cognition apprehending blue. [This occurs] not only on occasion; the pervasion or the certainty of [this being so] is constant. [The argument is] set out as follows: The object blue and the cognition apprehending blue are not different because they are certain to be observed simultaneously just as the appearance of two moons [and the cognition apprehending two moons].*[16]

The internalist refutation of the external world is directly connected with the assertion that

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[15]In his philosophical analysis of what is meant by 'illusion' in Advaita Vedānta, Richard W. Brooks (1973) makes a distinction between illusion and delusion. Illusion is intersubjective, while delusion is either a purely private experience, the judgement about which does not reflect a true state of affairs in the world, or the acceptance of an illusion as a true state of affairs in the world. On this definition, illusion implies an apparent objectivity, while delusion implies an apparent state of affairs which is subjective. Delusion also involves belief of some sort whereas illusion does not. These distinctions are useful when it comes to understanding notions such as error or ignorance in externalist and internalist epistemologies. I usually translate the term *avidyā (ma rig pa)* in this study as 'delusion' on the basis that in Buddhism, and especially in Madhyamaka, *avidyā* denotes first and foremost a particular defiled state of mind in the *subject*.

[16]C p.263-4. gzung 'dzin rdzas tha dad ma yin par bsgrub pa'i gtso bo snang ba thams cad shes pa gsal rig gi ngo bor skyes pa'i gtan tshigs dang/ lhan cig dmigs nges kyis sgrub par byed pa yin te/ de la yul sngon po dang sngo 'dzin gyi shes pa gnyis dus lhan cig tu tshad mas dmigs pa dang/ de'ang res 'ga' ba ma yin par gtan du khyab pa'am nges pa ste 'di ltar/ yul sngon po dang sngo 'dzin gyi blo chos can/ rdzas gzhan ma yin te/ lhan cig dmigs pa nges pa'i phyir/ zla ba gnyis snang ba zhin/

consciousness is self-aware. Self-awareness in this context means the mind's ability to be aware of its own cognitions—that is, not only does the mind apprehend the object blue, but it is aware of apprehending the object blue. Not only this, but both these awarenesses are simultaneous. One might well wonder why this simultaneity entails the claim that the object and the cognition of it must be of the same nature.[17] The internalist defence states that when phenomena are of separate substance, such as 1) blue and 2) yellow, they will not always be apprehended together or simultaneously. It does not always follow that when 1) is observed 2) will be observed at the same time. However, in the case of a cognition apprehending the object blue and the cognition that is aware of apprehending blue, the two are invariably simultaneous. One never occurs without the other. In short, the Cittamātra view holds that whatever appears to cognition must be cognition. If something is not cognized, it cannot be experienced at all. And if a person is not cognizant, then he or she is incapable of experiencing anything.[18]

Finally, internalist Cittamātrins assert the existence of a storehouse consciousness *(ālaya; kun gzhi)* understood as that aspect of consciousness that is not engaged with objects of cognition but which functions as the support for habitual tendencies.[19] Mi pham summarises the characteristics of the *ālaya* as follows:

> *The term 'storehouse consciousness' is applied to [that aspect of] one's consciousness which is mere awareness and clarity, not confined [like a] consciousness of engagement directed to different [objects], but that which functions as the support for habitual tendencies. It is neutral in essence, a mere awareness of the actuality of objects, and it arises moment by moment. It is endowed with the retinue of the five ever-present mere [mental states] of contact and so forth. It is not clearly*

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[17]C p.264.

[18]C p.264-5. shes pa la snang pa yin na shes pa yin dgos te/ ma shes na rang gis myong par yang mi rung ba'i .../

[19]For a detailed study of the *ālayavijñāna* in classical Yogācāra, and of the arguments justifying its existence, see Griffiths (1986:91-106).

focused (mi gsal ba), *but is an expansive awareness of the world and beings.*[20]

The key points about the storehouse consciousness are that it is the mere essence of clear and aware cognition, not engaged with the apprehension of objects, and not focused on anything in particular. Rather, it serves as the support or storehouse for karmic seeds which stay there until they ripen and produce their appropriate effects. The effects they produce take the form of the diverse appearances in cognition and the variety of experiences associated with them. It is these seeds, then—rather than external objects—that are asserted to be the causes of whatever appears to perception. That these appearances are apprehended as separate from the consciousness that cognizes them is due to a mistaken delusion, likened to the way a dreamer takes his dream to be objectively real. It can be seen from this reasoning that the storehouse consciousness must be asserted if one chooses an internalist position. It is necessary for the coherence of the position, which holds that the aspects appearing in perception are mental in nature and have a cause in consciousness.

Mi pham's characterization of the storehouse consciousness corresponds to what is stated in the classical Yogācāra treatises. The first definition given by Asaṅga in the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*[21], for example, is that it serves as the repository *(ālaya)* for mental seeds. Similarly, Vasubandhu describes it as a 'store-consciousness' for mental seeds in the *Triṃśikākārikā* and in the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa.*[22] However, both Asaṅga and Vasu-

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[20]C p.265. rang gi rnam par shes pa gsal rig tsam 'jug shes so so ba'i phyogs su ma lhungs pa zhig la bad chags kyi rten du gyur pa'i kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa zhes gdags pa ste/ de'ang ngo bo lung ma bstan yul gyi don tsam rig pa rgyun skad cig mar 'byung ba/ 'kor rig sogs kun 'gro lnga tsam dang ldan pa/ dmigs pa mi gsal ba/ snod bcud rgya chen po la dmigs pa yin par 'dod la/

[21]*Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, I.1-3, in Lamotte (1973:I.4 and II.12-14). Asaṅga cites the *Abhidharmasūtra* as an authority on the *ālaya*, and asserts that the consciousness that is endowed with all the [karmic] seeds of all phenomena is called storehouse consciousness. chos kun sa bon thams cad pa'i// rnam par shes pa kun gzhi ste// de bas kun gzhi rnam shes te//

[22]*Triṃśikākārikā* 2, in Anacker (1984:186); *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* 33, in Anacker (1984:113).

bandhu mention other functions of the *ālayavijñāna* as well, such that it is the appropriating consciousness *(ādānavijñāna)* that takes rebirth, and also the retributory consciousness *(vipākavijñāna),*[23] but Mi pham does not mention these.

Such are the broad lines of Mi pham's overview. It is clear that some of his points require elaboration and clarification, and this will occur over the following pages. In particular, he has not mentioned two developments, the first of which was important for Śāntarakṣita's philosophy and the second of which was instrumental in shaping Mi pham's own views. The first point—which Mi pham clearly assumes his reader is already familiar with—is the theory of cognition developed by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti that strongly influenced Śāntarakṣita and became normative in Tibetan Buddhism. And the second point is the development of the Madhyamaka view of the mind and cognition, and especially the emergence of dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgika re-interpretations of Dharmakīrti combining a realist view of perception with aspected cognition, and refuting self-awareness in relative truth. These debates have been addressed in lucid detail by Dreyfus (1997), and a selection of relevant points will be examined during the course of the present discussion.

VIII.2.5 Divergences of view

Mi pham does review two other heated debates between Buddhists, which can be divided into those that were current in India (in particular, in Śāntarakṣita's time) and those that emerged in Tibet. The MAL directly addresses the two main topics that proved controversial in Śāntarakṣita's time. The first concerns the nature of the relationship between the aspects appearing to cognition and the consciousness of them. There were three positions on this: those of the Non-Dualists, the Half-Eggists and the Equalists. All three positions

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[23] *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* I.5 and I.35; *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* 33.

apply to both Sautrāntika and Cittamātra views. The second area of contention concerns the nature of the aspect that appears to cognition. Views are divided between those who assert that the aspect is real *(sākāravādins)* and those who do not *(nirākāravādins).* This debate was internal to the Cittamātra school. Both these areas of controversy will be examined below.

The issue for this study is to know which of these options is preferred by Śāntarakṣita, and this is in itself a subject of contention between dGe lugs pa and rNying ma commentators. The MAL is open to different interpretations. Our task, then, will be to determine whether the rNying ma interpretation presented by Mi pham is justified by the text.

VIII.3 The main features of Śāntarakṣita's philosophy of mind

VIII.3.1 His general position

As indicated above, Mi pham considers that the Sautrāntika theory is the best if one accepts the existence of external objects, and his view is corroborated by two passages in the MAL where Śāntarakṣita implies that the Sautrāntika theory is acceptable if one posits external objects. The relevant passages are found first in verse 18:

> **Therefore, since this is the nature of consciousness, [the mind] is able to cognize itself. But how can it cognize objects whose nature is different?**
> *don gyi rang bzhin gzhan dag la// de yis ji ltar shes par 'gyur//*

And having refuted Vaibhāṣika, Vaiśeṣika, Jaina, Mīmāṃsaka, Lokāyata, Sāṃkhya and Vedāntin theories of cognition, Śāntarakṣita concludes in verse 43:

> **Therefore it is established from every point of view that cognition [occurs] with the appearance of various [aspects].**
> *de phyir sna tshogs snang ba yi// rnam shes rnam pa kun tu gnas//*

Śāntarakṣita considers that two of the main Sautrāntika principles are reasonable, that is:

1) consciousness can only cognize objects that are mental in nature, not objects that are material, since only two entities of similar natures can be causally connected; entailing 2) his preference for a theory of aspected cognition.[24] However, as we have already seen in Chapter VI , Śāntarakṣita does not accept the true existence of external objects, so it follows that he must in fact reject both Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika theories of cognition, including the compromise theory outlined above asserting that the first instant of cognition apprehends the object itself while subsequent moments apprehend the aspect in cognition. In verse 33 he states:

> **I have never perceived particles [such as] white and so forth, unitary and without parts, that appear to [a first-instant] cognition.**
> *rdul phran bdag nyid dkar la sogs// gcig pu'i bdag nyid cha med pa//*
> *shes pa gang la'ang snang gyur par// bdag gis rab tu tshor ba med//*[25]

Śāntarakṣita refutes the existence of partless particles on the grounds that they have never been perceived. He therefore adopts a position of strong substantival idealism. Since they have never been perceived, their existence cannot be established.

VIII.3.2 How does Śāntarakṣita understand *svasaṃvedana*?

The fact that Śāntarakṣita asserts the self-aware nature of consciousness *(svasaṃvedana; rang rig)* is accepted by all commentators and is not disputed. This assertion is given as one of the defining characteristics of the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka school.[26] However, the subject of self-awareness is certainly a matter of dispute in Buddhism generally. In Tibet, for example, dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgikas do not accept it[27] even in relative truth whereas

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[24]The MAL is used in dGe lugs pa institutions as a primary Indian source for Sautrāntika tenets. See Klein (1998:105, 109-110).
[25]Ichigō's translation of this verse is doubtful. "To what object would the [instantaneous] cognitions [proposed by the Sautrāntika) refer, since [the objects] 'white' and the like are of the nature of atoms which have no parts? [The cognition] does not [merely] perceive itself."
[26]For example, see Sopa and Hopkins (1989:283); Guenther (1971:131); Lati Rinbochay (1980:19).
[27]ibid., p.308. See also Williams (1998) for a detailed discussion of dGe lugs pa critiques of self-awareness. Self-awareness was refuted by Tsong kha pa as one of the eight great difficult points *(dka' gnas chen po bryyad)* and his successors in the dGe lugs pa school followed this lead. It is also one of the eight chief distinguishing features of Prāsaṅgika according to the dGe lugs pa scholar lCang skya. These eight are:

rNying ma pas do.[28] And in ancient India, Mādhyamikas such as Bhāvaviveka[29] and Śāntarakṣita accepted it while Candrakīrti[30] and Jñānagarbha[31] did not. Disputes concerning self-awareness were intense in 19th century Tibet when Mi pham was writing his commentary on the MAL, and we should be aware in reviewing his defence of Śāntarakṣita that he himself accepted *rang rig* in relative truth and upheld this view against his dGelugs pa critics on several occasions.[32] Our task here, then, is to examine what is meant by this term as used by Śāntarakṣita, and to analyse the role played by self-awareness in the cognition process on his view. By examining how Śāntarakṣita's presentation stands in relation to Buddhist critiques, we will assess whether it is reasonable for him to posit self-awareness. The view defended here is that Buddhist criticisms of self-awareness, and particularly of a concept of self-awareness of the type proposed by Śāntarakṣita, have largely been made at cross-purposes. This is why we need to begin by defining our terms.

In the first chapter of his recent study on self-awareness in Buddhist Madhyamaka, Paul Williams[33] attempts to clarify an alleged ambiguity in the Buddhist use of the term by distinguishing what he calls 'self-awareness (i)' and 'self-awareness (ii)'. The former refers to the subjective consciousness which takes the aspect of an appearing object as its object of

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1) refuting *ālaya*; 2) refuting *svasaṃvedana*; 3) the non-assertion of autonomous reasons; 4) its unique way of asserting external objects; 5) its proof that Hearers and Solitary Realizers realize the selflessness of phenomena; 6) its unique way of positing the conception of a self of phenomena as an affliction; 7) its unique way of asserting that disintegratedness is a functioning thing; and 8) its unique presentation of the three times. See *Unique Tenets of the Middle Way Consequence School* by Daniel Cozort, Snow Lion, Ithaca, New York, 1998.

From these points one can see that what is generally termed 'Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka' in the research literature is actually more precisely 'the dGe lugs pa presentation of Prāsaṅgika'. rNying ma pas generally consider themselves to be Prāsaṅgikas, but their interpretation of what this means differs on many issues, particularly with regard to *ālaya* and *svasaṃvedana*, and to the existence of disintegratedness.

[28]See Pettit (1997:77; 98-100). Mi pham himself accepts *rang rig* in relative truth. See Williams (1998, ch.7).

[29]See the reference from his *Tarkajvālā* in Williams (1998:4-5).

[30]MAV 6:74-75.

[31]SDV 6c: "because self-awareness is impossible". rang rig rigs pa ma yin phyir// In Eckel (1987:72, 157).

[32]Williams (1998) argues that Mi pham defends this position in his commentaries on the ninth chapter of Śantideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra,* on Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatara*, and on the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra.*

[33]*The Reflexive Nature of Awareness: A Tibetan Madhyamaka Defence* by Paul Williams, Curzon Press, London, 1988.

awareness. There is therefore 'seeing blue' and 'knowing I am seeing blue'. The latter type of self-awareness refers to reflexivity as a defining characeristic of consciousness in general. Williams appears to imply that this distinction has never been previously clarified. Ironically, however, Mi pham makes just such a distinction in his commentary on the MAL and emphasizes how crucial it is for a correct understanding of self-awareness.

> *When it is said that consciousness is **self-aware, this is therefore not** an assertion **in terms of** the production of the cognition of [something] actually different from consciousness itself, as when an axe strikes wood. Such [an assertion] is not made **in terms of the entities of objects** that cognition is aware of, **and an agent** that cognizes those objects. **Since this is therefore** [held to be] **the** [very] **nature of cognition, self-awareness** is conventionally acceptable and **appropriate.** [But] if self-awareness is asserted here as in fact the nature of subject and object, produced and producer, this is unacceptable.*[34]

Mi pham expresses a rNying ma view[35] that it is imperative to distinguish two types of self-awareness: the first is that awareness which arises when consciousness is intentionally engaged with an object of awareness, and when it can be divided, so to speak, into subject and object. The subjective awareness is aware of the aspect *(rnam pa; ākara)* of the object which is also mental and of the nature of consciousness, but which is termed the objective aspect of awareness for the purposes of this analysis. It is this type of self-awareness that we refer to when we discuss the topic of knowing that we know *x*. By contrast, the second type corresponds to Williams' 'self-awareness (ii)' and is a defining characteristic of the mind applied to consciousness as it is, without an intentional object and considered by itself and not necessarily in relation to anything else. Williams is undoubtedly correct in maintaining that discussion becomes hopelessly muddled if these two senses of the word are confused.

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[34]C. p.205-6. shes pa **de yi rang gis** rang **rig pa** zhes rjod pa gang yin pa **ni/** sta re shing la gdab pa lta bur dngos su rang las tha dad pa'i rang 'dzin shes pa bskyed pa'am/ shes pas rig par **bya** ba yul **dang/** yul de rig par **byed pa'i dngos por** 'dod ba **min** pa **de** yi **phyir** na **'di ni shes pa yi rang bzhin yin pas bdag zhes** kyi tha snyad 'thad cing **rung** ba yin no// de la dngos su rang rig pa zhes yul can dang yul bskyed bya skyed byed kyi rang bzhin du 'dod na mi 'thad de/

[35]This point is taught by contemporary rNying ma scholars such as Dzi gar kong sprul rin po che as a key to understanding this topic and Śāntarakṣita's view of it.

In selecting the terminology used here, we will follow the definitions and categories suggested by Matilal (1986:142-9).

1) The **reflexivity** of awareness refers to the definitional character of awareness as being self-aware. The theory is that if an awareness c_1 arises, it apprehends not only the thing, *a*, or the proposition, *p*, but also c_1 itself by the same token.

2) **Introspection** is specifically defined here as the awareness of an immediately preceding awareness. If c_1 arises, it apprehends only the thing, *a*, or the proposition, *p*, and we need another event, c_2, to apprehend c_1.

3) **Reflective awareness** refers to the awareness that an awareness has arisen in one's mind, such that one needs an inference to be aware of one's awareness. "Since I am aware of this object, there must have arisen an awareness in me."[36]

In verses 16-18 of the MAL, Śāntarakṣita asserts the reflexive nature of consciousness.

Consciousness arises as [that which is] intrinsically opposed to the nature of matter. The nature of that which is immaterial is self-awareness.
The self-aware nature of the mind should not be analysed into action and agent since it is unitary and without parts, and cannot be divided into three [i.e. the knower, the known and the knowing].
Therefore, since this is the nature of consciousness, [the mind] is able to cognize itself. But how can it cognize objects whose nature is different?

rnam shes bems po'i rang bzhin las// bzlog pa rab tu skye ba ste//
bems min rang bzhin gang yin pa// de 'di'i bdag nyid shes pa yin//
gcig pa cha med rang bzhin la// gsum gyi rang bzhin mi 'thad phyir//
de yi rang gi rig pa ni// bya dang byed pa'i dngos por min//
de'i phyir 'di ni shes pa yi// rang bzhin yin pas bdag shes rung//
don gyi rang bzhin gzhan dag la// de yis ji ltar shes par 'gyur//

Consciousness or mind is defined as that which is self-aware, and matter is defined as that which is not self-aware. Furthermore, self-awareness is asserted to be unitary and without parts *(gcig pa cha med)*, so it is not a cognition in the sense of a mental event that is pro-

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[36]Matilal adds that the first view is held by certain Buddhists, the second is the Nyāya view, and the third is the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka view (held by Kumārila), indicating just how generally this topic was debated in India during Śāntarakṣita's time.

duced by something and which has an object. In other words, self-awareness should not be understood in terms of a mind that cognizes another mind as its object; it is not a dualistic mode of cognition. Self-awareness is the very nature of consciousness, and not an act or specific mode of cognition; it implies that *all* cognition is naturally and necessarily self-aware.

These verses correspond to verses 2011-2028 in the TS where Śāntarakṣita similarly asserts the existence of self-awareness and defends his view against that of Kumārila who propounded the reflective type of self-awareness. In defending the reflexivity of consciousness, Śāntarakṣita argues that unless we define consiousness as capable of being aware of itself, then we cannot account for the possibility of it being aware of the apprehended aspect *(rnam pa; ākāra)*, which is mental in nature. If a cognition is uncognized, what other cognition could there be that would bring it to awareness? In other words, he argues that unless we posit reflexivity, introspection and reflectiveness are impossible (to use Matilal's terminology). If a subsequent moment of awareness is required for the first moment to be cognized, this implies the first moment occurred without one's awareness of it, but what determines the time or the cause for the subsequent moment of awareness to occur? As Kamalaśīla (TSP 2024) puts it, "How can a thing which is not cognized at the time of its own apprehension become cognized at the time of the cognition of something else?" The problem is that if one asserts either introspection or reflectiveness without also asserting reflexivity, one falls into infinite regress (TS 2025). If one has to postulate another cognition to account for awareness of a first cognition, there is infinite regress. On the other hand, if we accept that the first cognition is self-aware, then all subsequent moments can also be self-aware. Furthermore, unless we accept self-awareness our entire theory of cognition falls into absurdity since a first moment of apprehension would be unaware or unconscious, and could not therefore be defined as cognition at all. How can

one have an awareness that one is unaware of?[37] In other words, it is a contradiction in terms to call anything a cognition unless it is conscious and self-aware. In summary, Śāntarakṣita defines self-awareness as a combination of two factors:

> (i) a cognition does not depend on anything else to make itself known or cognized. 'Self-awareness' must therefore be understood structurally and conventionally as equivalent to an awareness that is 'not made known through another'.[38]
>
> (ii) it does not remain uncognized.[39]

That mind is self-aware is presented as a definition, and therefore as a presupposition. Arguments are invoked to make sense of the claim, but essentially it is a premise upon which the remainder of the theory is based. In his *vṛtti*, Śāntarakṣita posits self-awareness as part of the definition of mind as being luminous by nature.[40] And Kamalaśīla's *pañjikā* emphasizes the fact that self-awareness is not inferred as part of an epistemological theory but is posited on the basis of common empirical experience.[41] The quality of not needing anything else for the consciousness to be illuminating is part of our experience of things.[42] A similar approach is taken by Mokṣākaragupta,[43] who argues that since it is part of our common experience it cannot be denied—on principle, Mādhyamikas following Candrakīrti never *deny* that which is accepted conventionally by people. This element of empirical evidence allows Mi pham to disassociate *svasaṃvedana* from the Cittamātra theory of *svasaṃvedana* without which this definition of mind is still valid.[44]

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[37]Matilal (1986:144).
[38]Williams (1988:89).
[39]For this summary see Matilal (1986:156).
[40]MALV 16, in Ichigō (1985:68ff.). 'di rang rig pa'i rang bzhin du rnam par gzhag pa ni rang bzhin gyis gsal ba'i bdag nyid yin pa'i phyir te/ shing rta la sogs pa la rig pa med pa'i rang bzhin las bzlog pa'i phyir ro//
[41]MALP 16, in Ichigō (1985:69ff.). gsal ba gzhan la mi ltos pa nyid du tha snyad kyi lam la 'jug pa yin no//
[42]Williams (1998:23-24).
[43]See Kajiyama (1989:51).
[44]See Williams (1998:24-25).

Mi pham clarifies several points regarding Śāntarakṣita's concept of self-awareness.[45]

(1) He acknowledges that any theory that interprets self-awareness as an intentional mode of awareness is unacceptable. He points out that any theory of cognition based on the principle that a cognizing consciousness is produced by the appearance of an object of cognition can be refuted according to the arguments used by Nāgārjuna in his refutation of causation.[46] Furthermore, it is absurd to imply that anything can engage with itself—that a knife can cut itself, and so on—and equally absurd to imagine that the mind can apprehend itself as an object. These arguments entail that self-awareness is only coherent as long as it is understood as a non-intentional mode of consciousness.

(2) Mi pham's second point is to demonstrate the implications of Śāntarakṣita's definition of mind and matter. Since material objects are not aware (by definition), they depend on a mind that is clear and aware to be known. But since the mind is clear and aware by nature (and by definition), it is not dependent on any object in order to be aware of its own essence.[47] So the conventional existence of self-awareness is a reasonable assertion.[48] The point is that consciousness is not dependent on anything else to become aware; that is its nature. The example given is that of a candle flame which illuminates the darkness: dark-ness depends on candlelight to be illuminated, but for the illumination of the candlelight itself no other cause is necessary.

(3) Mi pham further acknowledges that self-awareness is unacceptable if it is held to be

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[45]C p.205ff.
[46]MMK Ch.1.
[47]This is the argument given in TS 2012.
[48]C p.206. de lta bas na yul bum pa sogs bem po yin pas de dag la gsal zhing rig pa mi srid la/ des na de dag gi ngo bor rig par byed pa rang las gzhan pa gsal zhing rig pa'i blo la ltos dgos kyang/ shes pa 'di ni rang gi ngo bo bem po lta bu ma yin pas rang gi ngo bo rig par bya ba rkyen gzhan la ltos mi dgos pa de phyir rang rig ces bzhag pa tha snyad ches 'thad de/

truly existent.[49] In fact, those who attack it and demonstrate its absurdity through the examples of the mind illuminating itself, the eye seeing itself, an acrobat riding on his own shoulders and so on, would be justified to do so if it were held to be truly existent. In such a case 'being itself' would be incompatible with 'being an object of awareness'. However, if self-awareness is not held to be truly existent, subject and object are mere dependent designations *(btags pa tsam)*.

(4) Finally, Mi pham maintains that the theory of self-awareness is crucial if one is to accord any validity to knowledge in the case of defiled beings as Svātantrikas, of course, want to do.

> *The [validity of] inference as [a mode of] valid cognition* (pramāṇa; tshad ma) *is finally down to direct perception* (pratyakṣa; mngon sum), *and [in turn] the direct perception of objects is finally down to the clear experience of self-awareness. If one asserts any principles for the validity of cognition in [beings with] limited understanding, self-awareness will therefore be indispensable.*[50]

Mi pham's comment here refers to the two modes of valid cognition accepted by Buddhist logicians, namely perception and inference.[51] And indeed, to appreciate Śāntarakṣita's assertion of self-awareness one has to refer to the work of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti on which his theory was based. Dharmakīrti states that cognition is self-luminous *(svayam prakāśa; rang gsal ba)*, that is, self-presencing and inherently reflexive.[52] His presentation of cognition is explained by Dreyfus (1997:339) as follows:

> *From one side, consciousness has an externally oriented feature called the objective aspect* (grāhyākāra; bzung rnam). *This is the form that a mental state assumes in order to bring about knowledge of an external object. The second side*

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[49]This was indeed one of the criticisms of self-awareness, for example in Prajñākaramati's *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* on ch.9:21. See Williams (1998:47).

[50]C p.208. de'ang rjes dpag tshad ma'i mtha' mngon sum la thug cing/ mngon sum don rig kyang mthar gsal bar nyams su myong ba'i rang rig gis tshar phyin pa yin pas tshur mthong tshad ma'i rnam gzhag zhig 'dod na rang rig med du mi rung ba yin pas/ The phrase *'tshur mthong tshad ma'* is a technical term for a category of valid perception in Mi pham's unique system of *pramāṇa*. See the end of this Chapter.

[51]Dignāga, *Pramāṇasamuccaya* I.2a-b, in Hattori (1968:24).

[52]See Dreyfus (1997:338-341); Matilal (1986:150ff); *Nyāyabindu* I.10.

is the internal knowledge of our own mental states. It is called the subjective aspect (grāhakākāra; 'dzin rnam), *the feature that ensures that we are aware of the objective aspect, the representation of the object. However, these two parts do not exist separately. Rather, each mental state consists of both and, hence, is necessarily reflexive.*

This presentation is very close to that given by Dignāga.[53]

The cognition which cognizes the object, a thing of colour, etc., has [a twofold appearance, namely] the appearance of the object and the appearance of itself [as subject]. But the cognition which cognizes this cognition of the object has [on the one hand] the appearance of that cognition which is in conformity with the object and [on the other hand] the appearance of itself. Otherwise, if the cognition of the object had only the form of the object, or if it had only the form of itself, then the cognition of cognition would be indistinguishable from the cognition of the object.

For both Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, self-awareness is not a third type of valid cognition, but rather one of the four types of direct perception (*pratyakṣa; mngon sum*) which are sensory, mental, yogic and self-cognizing perceptions.[54] For Dharmakīrti it is not introspective or reflective because it does not take mental states as its objects. Self-cognition is nothing over and above the subjective aspect of consciousness beholding an objective aspect. It is the self-revealing aspect of a mental episode, the intuitive presence that we feel towards our own mental episodes. On this view, our limited self-presence is not due to a metaphysical self but to self-awareness.[55] It is simply the nature of mind to know that it knows.

It is relevant to our study of the MAL to note that the arguments advanced by Dharmakīrti in support of self-awareness are essentially tied to the Yogācāra thesis that the distinction between the apprehensible object *(grāhya)* and the apprehending cognition *(grāhaka)* is an illusion like that of a double vision of the moon. An awareness-event is an indivisible whole, it illuminates itself, for there is nothing else to illuminate. The non-difference of

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[53]*Pramāṇasamuccaya* I.11ab, translation in Hattori (1968:29-30).
[54]See Hattori (1968:27). Dignāga explains the features of perception in *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, I.6a-d, and self-awareness as a type of perception in I.7a-b. See also Mokṣākaragupta in Kajiyama (1989:44); Lati Rinbochay (1980:16ff).
[55]Dreyfus (1997:339-340).

the objective and subjective aspects of cognition is established on the evidence that the two are invariably and necessarily apprehended together.[56]

It is interesting to compare this idealist defence of self-awareness with the arguments put forward by Candrakīrti and Jñānagarbha against self-awareness, since this will help us gauge Śāntarakṣita's view more precisely.[57] Candrakīrti refutes self-awareness in the context of his lengthy refutation of Cittamātra. In MAV 6.74-75 he writes:

> *Self-awareness can indeed be experienced,*
> *Yet since a memory of a memory is unknown*
> *It would be like something other and never known arising in the mind.*
> *This reasoning vanquishes [all] others.*
>
> *According to our tradition,*
> *Because memory is not other than that [which experiences an object]*
> *It is the memory which thinks 'I saw'.*
> *This agrees with ordinary conventional experience.*[58]

Candrakīrti refutes the Cittamātra theory of self-awareness by attacking their argument establishing it from memory. This was developed by Dignāga.[59] The idea is that memory involves a past object as well as a past experience. The recollection of these two elements differs in their form. I remember a subjective experience as well as the object itself. This difference can only be accounted for if we posit that the original experience had two aspects, one oriented towards the external world and one directed inward. Candrakīrti's refutation boils down to refuting the true existence of the subjective and objective aspects taken as distinct from each other and giving rise to distinct conscious series. While Prā-

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[56]*Pramāṇavārttika,* Pratyakṣa chapter, verse 328; and *Pramāṇaviniścaya* I.55. Cited in Matilal (1986:154).
[57]Although Williams (1998:43) asserts that there is only one Indian source refuting self-awareness in relative truth, namely Candrakīrti, there is at least one other—Jñānagarbha. So in the 8th century when the MAL was composed, the rejection of self-awareness was a view that could not be ignored. It might be the case, in the light of other evidence uncovered by Williams, that Candrakīrti and Jñānagarbha were the exceptions that proved the rule.
[58]MAV 6:74-75. rang rig pa ni grub la rig mod kyi// de lta'ang dran pa'i dran pa rigs min te// gzhan phyir ma shes rgyud la skyes pa bzhin// gtan tshigs 'dis ni khyad par dag kyang 'joms// gang phyir gang gis yul myong gyur de las// dran pa 'di gzhan nga la yod min pa// de phyir nga yis mthong snyam dran 'gyur te// 'di yang 'jig rten tha snyad tshul lugs yin//
[59]*Pramāṇasamuccaya*, I.11c-12d. See Hattori (1968:30-31); Dreyfus (1997:550, n.1).

saṅgikas accept this phenomenological description of the memory process, they do not treat subjective and objective aspects as philosophically 'other'; they accept it as a description of conventional experience without analysis. It follows that Candrakīrti is actually refuting as truly existent the *reflective* character ascribed to self-awareness, that is, the mind's ability to become aware of its own thoughts and experiences. He does not refute reflexive awareness or memory in this passage, in relative truth.

As for Jñānagarbha, he refutes self-awareness in SDV and SDVV 6c. The SDV asserts:

> *(Because) self-awareness is impossible.*[60]

Jñānagarbha argues that the mind cannot cognize itself because it is empty of any aspect of itself.[61] If one were to respond by asserting that the mind does cognize an aspect of itself, that aspect would be different from the cognition and lead to infinite regress. If self-awareness of cognition A is an awareness of the image of cognition A, then it is no longer identical to cognition A itself. So cognition A would require another awareness to be aware of itself, and so on. Jñānagarbha supports his view by citing Dignāga and Dharmakīrti who hold that there can be no cognition without the aspect of what is cognized.[62] In summary, Jñānagarbha argues that if self-awareness involves the mind cognizing an aspect of itself this leads to infinite regress, and if it does not involve cognizing an aspect then it is not a cognition. Self-awareness is therefore untenable. However, one must note here that Jñānagarbha's refutation of *svasaṃvedana* comes in a section of the SDV dedicated to ultimate truth. Jñānagarbha refutes *svasaṃvedana* in ultimate truth, but there is no indication that he refutes it in relative truth.

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[60]rang rig rigs pa ma yin (phyir)// Eckel (1987:157).
[61]SDV and SDVV 6c in Eckel (1987:72-3 and 157-8). shes pa ni bdag gis bdag shes pa ma yin te// rang snang bas stong pa'i phyir shes pa gzhan bzhin no//
[62]Dharmakīrti criticises the doctrine of *nirākārajñānavāda* in *Pramāṇavārttika* 2.13-18. See Eckel (1987: 120-121). We have already noted that self-awareness is linked with aspected cognition for Dharmakīrti.

Once again, the refutation is based on the idea that the subjective and objective aspects of a cognitive episode are philosophically other. But Jñānagarbha's argument itself assumes the same as his opponent in this respect: that the image or objective aspect is real, either it does exist, or it does not exist and it is absent. And, just like Candrakīrti, his refutation concerns the reflective nature of consciousness, not the reflexive nature of consciousness.

Śāntarakṣita's reply to these views would surely be that it is a fundamental mistake to consider self-awareness as an awareness *of* anything—including awareness of another mental episode, of an image, of an object, and so on. Such a view, he would agree with his opponents, invariably leads to contradictions. Self-awareness only makes sense as the characteristic reflexivity of consciousness, not as an inherently reflective activity of the mind. Śāntarakṣita goes further than this, and implies that cognition is impossible unless we assert the reflexivity of consciousness. Without this, one cannot account for awareness occurring at all; awareness is nothing unless it is aware of itself. The Nyāya theorists countered this view by asserting that knowledge and the knowledge of knowledge must be distinguished because they have distinct causal conditions.[63] Knowledge is caused by the presence of an object (a real) whereas self-awareness is caused by mental causes and conditions. But in Śāntarakṣita's system this defence does not work because he has rejected external objects and considers the causes of cognition to be mental in origin. There is thus no difference in nature between the objective and subjective aspects of a cognitive episode. His assertion in the MAL that consciousness is unitary echoes Dharmakīrti's view that cognition is an indivisible whole, and the difference between subjective and objective is an illusion.

Given all the evidence for and against self-awareness in ultimate and in relative truth it

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[63]Matilal (1986:160ff).

would seem that the fuss is not really warranted as far as Śāntarakṣita's view is concerned. He explicitly rejects the reflective model of self-awareness which leads to dualist complications. All he is saying is that mind is defined as that which is self-aware. And Mi pham is saying, quite reasonably, that there is no good reason for Prāsaṅgikas to disagree with this as a definition of conventional mind, for it does not necessarily entail any unwanted philosophical commitments such as the ontological reality of the mind. Indeed, the reverse is the case: it would be unreasonable for Prāsaṅgikas to reject self-awareness in relative truth—on the understanding that they are specifically rejecting the reflexivity of consciousness—since it accords with conventional experience and can therefore be accepted as such without investigation.[64] As Williams (1998:174) reminds us, for Mi pham Prāsaṅgikas do not have a view about the relative in any case, and it is not legitimate for them either to accept or to deny anything in relative truth as long as it accords with ordinary conventional experience.

That critiques of Śāntarakṣita's position are based on differences in definition is especially clear in the modern-day dGe lugs pa presentation of cognition given by Lati Rinbochay.[65] In her introduction to his book *Mind in Tibetan Buddhism*, Elizabeth Napper explains that according to the dGe lugs pa presentation of Sautrāntika[66] there are four types of direct perceivers (*pratyakṣa; mngon sum*): sense, mental, self-knowing (*svasaṃvedana*) and yogic. With regard to the third, she points out that "the positing or not of the existence of such a direct perceiver serves as a major basis for distinguishing schools of tenets" and cites the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka school as one of those that does assert its existence.[67] She then goes on to explain what Lati Rinbochay means by the term.

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[64]Mi pham's commentary on MAV 6.74-75 argues just these points.
[65]*Mind in Tibetan Buddhism* by Lati Rinbochay and Elizabeth Napper, Snow Lion, 1980, p.17ff.
[66]The dGe lugs pa presentation of awareness and knowledge (*blo rig*) is based on Sautrāntika, following what is for the most part Dharmakīrti's approach.
[67]ibid., p.19.

> *For those schools which do posit the existence of a self-knower, its function is to make possible the memory of one's cognitions. Its proponents say that if there were no consciousness observing the consciousness that perceives an object, there would be no way for one to know that one had perceived something. The systems which do not assert self-knowers deny that they are necessary in order to remember one's cognitions and say that positing them leads to an infinite regress of self-knowers knowing the self-knowers, and so forth.*
>
> *The function of a self-knower [i.e.* svasaṃvedana*] is just to make possible memory of former consciousnesses. It does not have an active role of introspection or self-awareness, as its name might suggest; such is carried out by a mental factor called introspection (*saṃprajanya; shes bzhin*) which can accompany a main consciousness.*[68]

And later in the book Lati Rinpochay (1980:59-60) himself asserts:

> *The definition of a self-knower is that which has the aspect of an apprehender. (...) We need to identify the apprehended (*grāhya; bzung ba*) and the apprehender (*grāhaka; 'dzin pa*). The blue which is the object of the eye consciousness apprehending blue is the apprehended, whereas the eye consciousness itself is the apprehender. Furthermore, the eye consciousness apprehending blue sees the aspect of blue and is thus called that which has the aspect of the apprehended (*grāhya-ākāra; bzung rnam*). The consciousness which experiences that eye consciousness sees the apprehender itself and is thus called that which has the aspect of an apprehender (*grāhaka-ākāra; 'dzin rnam*).*

In these passages, the authors define *svasaṃvedana* being that the positing of which distinguishes different schools of Buddhist tenets. It is justified solely in relation to memory and described in terms of the dual aspect of what we have termed reflective consciousness, where the self-knower apprehends the consciousness apprehending blue and so on. This is exactly what Śāntarakṣita rejects as a definition of *svasaṃvedana* in verse 17 of the MAL, where he states that it does not concern apprehended and apprehender. Clearly, such an analysis is quite different from that of Mi pham, and quite different too from the final view of the rNying ma pas which can now be seen to be much closer to that of Śāntarakṣita than that of his dGe lugs pa critics.

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[68]ibid., p.19.

VIII.3.3 Does Śāntarakṣita accept *ālayavijñāna* in relative truth?

Another area of contention is whether or not Śāntarakṣita accepts the Cittamātra theory of eight consciousnesses, including the storehouse consciousness *(ālayavijñāna; kun gzhi)*. This question is of interest for several reasons. First, Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas of the dGe lugs pa school accept only six consciousnesses and do not accept the Cittamātrin storehouse consciousness, whereas in relative truth rNying ma pas accept the theory of eight consciousnesses in their final position.[69] The issue of the *ālaya* is therefore a live one in the Tibetan tradition.[70] Second, there is disagreement between certain dGe lugs pa interpretations and that of Mi pham as to what Śāntarakṣita's final position actually is. Thirdly, in India this question represented one of the main doctrinal differences between Cittamātrins Following Scripture and Cittamātrins Following Logic, although the distinction was probably made only later by Tibetans.[71] The former, in the line of Asaṅga, accept eight consciousnesses while the latter, in the line of Dharmakīrti, accept only six.

According to the dGe lugs pa doxologist dKon chog 'jigs med dbang po, for example, the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka school is defined as a school that asserts six consciousnesses and that rejects the storehouse consciousness.

> *Both subschools [i.e. Yogācāra-Svātantrika and Sautrāntika-Svātantrika] do not assert a mind-basis-of-all or an afflicted mind but assert six consciousnesses.*[72]

Mi pham disagrees and contends that Śāntarakṣita does accept the Cittamātra model of cognition entailing eight consciousnesses including the storehouse consciousness. But

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[69]Dudjom Rinpoche (1991:178-186); Bransford Wilson (1984:39).

[70]The dGe lugs pa scholar Gung tang (1762-1823) rejects the identification of the storehouse consciousness with the *tathāgatagarbha*, a position sometimes ascribed to Yogācāra-Madhyamaka and especially to Kamalaśīla. This debate is presented in *La théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra* by D. Seyfort-Ruegg. See also Bransford Wilson (1984:39ff.) who mentions that other dGe lugs pa refutations of the storehouse consciousness emphasize that even if it is accepted it can be of no soteriological value, and that tantric and sūtric presentations of it are often confused. The topic of the *ālayavijñāna* was also discussed by Tsong kha pa as one of the difficult points.

[71]ibid., pp.51-2. See his note 45.

[72]Sopa and Hopkins (1989:287). The translation is theirs; mind-basis-of-all refers to *ālaya (kun gzhi)*.

before we examine Mi pham's reasoning, let us see the evidence that might support dKon chog 'jigs med dbang po's assertion. In verse 34 of the MAL we read:

> **It is established [by the Sautrāntikas] that the five kinds of sense consciousness have aggregates [of atoms] as their object, while the sixth [i.e. the mental consciousness] has cognition and mental states as its objects.**
> *rnam shes lnga yi khams rnams ni// bsags la dmigs pa'i rnam pa yin//*
> *sems dang sems byung dmigs pa ni// drug par bzhag pa byas pa yin//*

It is the Sautrāntika view that cognition involves six consciousnesses: five sense consciousness and the mental consciousness, each with their own associated types of object. Now, although the Sautrāntika theory is not Śāntarakṣita's final position, as he is not an externalist, we have already seen that it is his favoured position if external objects are posited. And since we also know (verses 64-66) that Śāntarakṣita *qua* Mādhyamika accepts empirical reality conventionally, it is not unreasonable to conclude that he accepts the six consciousness model of cognition in relative truth. As Mi pham writes:

> *However, in this [treatise, i.e. the MAL] external objects are not said to be hidden, [that is, inaccessible to direct cognition]; they appear as the projections of the mind, and their appearance has to be analysed by conventional reasoning.*[73]

Although Śāntarakṣita does not infer the existence of external objects despite their imperceptibility, as the Sautrāntikas do, nevertheless cognition is explained in these terms conventionally. This dGe lugs pa interpretation has the advantage of being supported by the fact that this was the approach taken by Dharmakīrti.[74] Furthermore, it is reinforced by the view of the 15th century Sa skya scholar Śākya mchog ldan who identified Sautrāntika threads in Śāntarakṣita's treatment of relative truth.[75] He classifies Mādhya-

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[73]V p.56. 'dir phyi don lkog na mo mi 'dod kyang// sems kyi dbang gi snang ba sna tshogs su shar ba'i snang tshul de la tha snyad kyi gzhal tshul 'di ltar byed dgos so//

[74]Mi pham (V p.56) cites Dharmakīrti's famous statement: "When I investigate outer phenomena, I take the Sautrāntika view as my starting point." However, Dreyfus (1997:20-21) points out that the importance and nature of the Sautrāntika school in India is unclear, and the Sautrāntika doctrine itself is not always readily defined. Tibetan commentators were aware that Dharmakīrti's position does not always follow the Sautrāntika doctrine as presented by Vasubandhu, and therefore created a separate doxographical category for his work, dividing the school into Sautrāntikas Following Reasoning and Sautrāntikas Following Scripture.

[75]Mimaki (1976:74-5) points out that both Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla present certain aspects of the Sautrāntika doctrine in their respective discussions of momentariness *(kṣaṇabhaṅga; skad cig ma 'jig pa).* The analysis presented by Śākya mchog ldan (1428-1507) is summarized in Mimaki (1982:36-7) from *The Complete Works (gsung 'bum) of gSer mdog Paṇ chen Śākya mchog ldan*, Thimpu, 1975, vol.14, fol.4a4 ff.

mikas into those who reach the Madhyamaka view by way of lower doctrines *(grub mtha' 'og ma)* and those who present it directly after seeing what is accepted by the world *('jig rten grags pa nyid)*. Śāntarakṣita belongs to the former category and according to this Sa skya author reaches the Madhyamaka view progressively by way of Sautrāntika and then Yogācāra. This analysis does of course follow the structure of the MAL presentation. Despite such considerations, Mi pham argues that there are grounds for believing Śāntarakṣita accepted the eight consciousnesses in his final position. His argument is found in the preliminary section to his commentary.

> *Regarding [Śāntarakṣita's] way of expounding the Cittamātra [view], certain later commentators have taught that the great Abbot did not assert a storehouse consciousness different from the six consciousnesses. They say that in general the term* 'kun gzhi' *refers to a certain subtle mental consciousness, and that some Great Mādhyamikas and many tantrikas affirm this too. Since the term* 'kun gzhi' *does not occur explicitly in this text, commentators have been able to make whatever assertions suited their purpose. Yet the assertion of appearances as mind does not make sense without a definite acceptance of a storehouse consciousness that serves as the repository of habitual tendencies. If an authentic Cittamātra doctrine is propounded, in the same way that it is presented in the* Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, *the* Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra *and other texts, the storehouse consciousness must certainly be asserted. The storehouse consciousness is, as it were, the core of the Cittamātra viewpoint. If that is established, the existence of the afflicted mental consciousness* (nyon yid; kliṣṭamanas) *is also affirmed and not contradicted, and so the eight consciousnesses are necessarily asserted.*
> *In this text [Śāntarakṣita] says, "I will briefly teach a vehicle that unifies the two approaches* (tshul)*". It seems to me, therefore, that in accordance with the quotation from the* Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra *about the five objects of knowledge, the three natures and so forth, [Śāntarakṣita] does affirm the storehouse consciousness [just as] it is asserted in the general Cittamātra doctrine.*[76]

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[76]V p.46. sems tsam du bzhed tshul de la'ang phyis su gzhung 'cad ba dag gis/ mkhan chen 'di nyid kyis tshogs drug las tha dad pa'i kun gzhi mi bzhed la/ spyir yid rnam la cha phye ba'i phra mo 'ga' zhig la kun gzhi'i sgras bstan pa dbu ma pa chen po 'ga' dang sngags phyogs su'ang mang po 'byung ngo zhes gsungs kyang/ spyir gzhung 'di na kun gzhi bzhed pa'i tshig zin gsal kha mi snang bas rang 'gnod dang bstun te de ltar bzhag kyang re zhig chog mod/ lar snang ba sems su 'dod pa la bag chags 'dzin pa'i kun gzhi zhig nges par khas ma blangs na mi rung bas/ lang gshegs dang dgongs 'grel la sogs pa'i bstan don ji ltar ba bzhin du

Mi pham concedes that it is not unreasonable to say that the MAL presents a six-consciousness view of cognition. The term *kun gzhi (ālaya)* does not appear in the text. There is no positive evidence that can discredit such an interpretation easily. However, he suggests two reasons for saying that the *ālaya* is accepted in the MAL: the first is based on the logic of internal coherence, the second is a scriptural validation.

Mi pham argues that since there *is* evidence that Śāntarakṣita accepted the idea that aspects appearing to cognition are caused by karmic seeds and habitual tendencies, it is a necessary corollary that the storehouse consciousness must be accepted too. The part of the Cittamātra theory that is espoused by Śāntarakṣita is presented in verses 79-81.

> **Therefore [having established the non-substantiality of all things, and since things do nevertheless appear as mere experience] one must infer that there are seeds corresponding to the ideas of existence, non-existence and the like, [which] arise from the beginningless continuum of existence.**
> **These [ideas] do not arise by the force of [external] entities since the [latter] do not [truly] exist, the inherent nature of such entities having been refuted in detail.**
> **Because they occur serially, [ideas] do not arise without cause, or from an eternal [cause], nor are they themselves eternal. Therefore, the first [moment of mind] arises from [a preceding moment] of its own kind, because [ideas/ appearances arise] in the manner of being habituated to something.**[77]
>
> *de phyir thog med srid rgyud nas// dngos dang dngos med rtog sogs kyi//*
> *rigs mthun sa bon yod par ni// rjes su dpag par bya ba yin//*
> *'di ni dngos po'i mthu stobs kyis// 'byung ba ma yin de med phyir//*
> *dngos po rnams kyi bdag nyid de// rgya cher rab tu bkag pa yin//*
> *rim gyis 'byung phyir glo bur min// rtag 'byung ma yin rtag ma yin//*
> *de bas goms 'dra de nyid phyir// dang po rang gi rigs las skyes//*

If ideas, images, aspects, and anything that appears to cognition, are not produced by any

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sems tsam mtshan nyid pa zhig khas len na kun gzhi nges par 'dod dgos te/ kun gzhi ni sems tsam gyi grub mtha'i snying po ltar bu yin cing/ de grub na nyon yid kyang yod pa la 'gal ba med pas tshogs brgyad 'dod dgos la/ gzhung 'dir yang/ tshul gnyis kyis bsdus pa'i theg pa mdor bstan pa ni 'di lta ste/ zhes chos lnga rang bzhin gsum sogs kyi lung drangs pa ltar sems tsam spyi lugs kyi kun gzhi'ang ci'i phyir mi bzhed de bzhed do snyam mo/ This translation has benefitted from oral teachings by mKhan chen Pad ma shes rab.

[77]Ichigō's translation of the last two lines of verse 81 appears doubtful. He interprets *'gom'* as referring to meditation, but it is not clear why meditation is relevant in the context. "Therefore, the [notions of production and non-production, which we have discussed] previously, arise from their own species, because they are indeed [ideas of existence and non-existence], as in meditation practice."

type of external cause whatsoever, then they must be produced from 'seeds' internal to the mind and mental in nature. These seeds arise from the beginningless continuum of mind that does not itself have a cause. Since that which appears to cognition is subject to the laws of causation, this means that appearances are caused rather than uncaused or eternal; and there is a type-correspondence between the seed (cause) and the appearance (effect) such that appearances do not arise at random. Furthermore, Śāntarakṣita adds that this similarity of type between seed and appearance, and the principle that the seed or appearance that arises at t_1 is causally linked to a similar appearance arising at t_2, is consistent with the idea that the tendencies generating such appearances are habitual. Habit, by definition, is a process that tends to produce successive events of a similar kind.

Mi pham's argument, then, infers from the above three verses that Śāntarakṣita *must* accept the storehouse consciousness if he accepts karmic seeds and habitual tendencies. His argument is persuasive, at least provisionally, if we want the MAL to be internally coherent.

The second justification advanced for Mi pham's interpretation relies on the scriptural authority of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, which speaks of the five objects of knowledge, three natures and so on, which are all regarded as features of the Cittamātra view. The verses in question are the following:

> *Then at that time the Blessed One recited these verses:*
> *The world [as we see it] exists not, pluralities of things rise from the Mind being seen [externally]; body, property, and abode are manifested to us as of the* Ālaya-vijñāna.
> *The leaders talk about* citta, manas, [mano-]vijñāna, *the [triple]* svabhāva, *the five* dharmas, *the twofold egolessness, and purification...*
> *Analysed down to atoms, there is indeed no form to be discriminated as such; what can be established is the [truth of] Mind Only, which is not believed by those who cherish erroneous views.*[78]

The idea here is that if Śāntarakṣita's exposition of Cittamātra doctrine in relative truth is

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[78]*The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, II.XIII, transl. D.T. Suzuki, George Routledge and Sons Ltd, London, 1932, p.49.

authentic, it must be comprehensive and complete. He cannot accept part of the doctrine and not another part—and especially, he cannot reasonably reject such a structurally crucial element as *ālayavijñāna*. His acceptance of the storehouse consciousness is inferred as a matter of internal consistency and doctrinal authenticity. This argument of Mi pham's is highly debatable and we could even say it is begging the question. The point is to determine what Śāntarakṣita did and did not accept of the Cittamātra doctrine in developing his synthesis. Mimaki (1982:27-54) and others[79] have shown that the mere appellation of Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka does not actually entail a complete endorsement of Sautrāntika theories; similar considerations could well apply to Yogācāra-Madhyamaka. Furthermore, Williams (1998:99-100) points out that while Mi pham was strongly influenced by Śāntarakṣita's interpretation of *ālayavijñāna* and maintained it himself in relative truth, the meaning he ascribed to the term cannot be identified with that upheld by Cittamātrins for whom it is resistant to ultimate analysis. A similar comment might apply to the MAL so it is too much to assume that Śāntarakṣita must have accepted the Cittamātra doctrine wholesale for the sake of consistency.

In order to make sense of these conflicting claims, it is helpful to recall the distinction made by mKhan po Pad ma shes rab, and mentioned in Chapter III, between early and later Cittamātrins. Śāntarakṣita's view and Mi pham's interpretation of it are coherent only if we make this distinction, the thrust of which is that early Cittamātrins such as Asaṅga do not posit the ultimate existence of the mind (whether that be described as *ālayavijñāna* or *svasaṃvedana*) whereas later Cittamātrin theorists such as Dharmapāla do assert the mind in ultimate truth.[80] If we examine evidence for the mKhan po's claim specifically in relation to *ālayavijñāna,* we note a significant shift in emphasis between Asaṅga and

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[79]See Dreyfus (1997).
[80]Oral comment by mKhan po Pad ma shes rab.

Dharmapāla. The first chapter of the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* presents *ālayavijñāna* and the associated *kliṣṭamanas* in detail, and on a number of occasions asserts that they exist. But the existence of both these consciousnesses is argued through reasoning on the grounds that if one does *not* posit them, one cannot make sense of other aspects of the mind and the cognition process.[81] In other words, they are theoretically necessary and perform crucial phenomenological functions, but Asaṅga does not make the leap from this explanatory analysis to an ontological assertion. Nevertheless, critics could maintain that the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* is ambiguous because Asaṅga does not mention the Madhyamaka paradigm of the Two Truths.[82] This may be one of the reasons for the subsequent disputes between Mādhyamikas and Yogācārins.

By contrast, Dharmapāla offers a Yogācāra interpretation of the Two Truths in his dispute with Bhāvaviveka, that commits him to defending the validity of worldly convention and of language, to asserting the *trisvabhāva* is a fundamental structure of the mind that continues through defilement and enlightenment (the difference being that a buddha is aware of the unreality of the imagined), and to according an ultimate status to the mind which Mādhyamikas will find unacceptable.[83] His position leads him to state:

> ...*the reality of that which is imagined* (parikalpita) *is non-existent, while the reality of things that arise co-dependently* (paratantra) *does exist.*[84]

We have evidence that Śāntarakṣita rejected Dharmapāla's interpretation of the Two

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[81]For example, I.7 explains that if *kliṣṭamanas* did not exist, then there are six features of the mind that cannot be explained. Similarly, I.33-42 cites the various mental phenomena which cannot be explained without *ālayavijñāna*. They include defiled actions *(karmasaṃkleśa)*, rebirth in *saṃsāra (janmasaṃkleśa)*, taking on a new body, the six consciousnesses, rebirth in the higher realms *(samāhitā bhūmiḥ)*, existence in the formless realms *(ārūpyadhātu)*, thoughtless moments of consciousness in this life, supramundane thoughts in the realm that is beyond consciousness and unconsciousness *(naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana)*, and physical experiences at the moment of death that are caused by *karma*. See Lamotte (1973:53-63).

[82]See Keenan (1997:40).

[83]The text of Dharmapāla's critique of Bhāvaviveka is extant only in Chinese as the *Ta-ch'eng Kuang Pai-lun Shih-lun*, T.1571, vol.30, pp.242-250. The Chinese text is reproduced in Keenan (1997) with an introduction and translation.

[84]T.1571:247b15, in Keenan (1997:104).

Truths, and the wish to refute Dharmapāla's position may have been a powerful motivating factor behind not only Jñānagarbha's SDV but also the MAL itself.[85] Returning to the MAL, then, we could say that Śāntarakṣita incorporates the *early* Cittamātra view into his synthesis in a comprehensive manner.

Mi pham does not allude to these distinctions within the Cittamātra school, and instead he claims that dGe lugs and rNying ma disagreements on the existence of the storehouse consciousness in general, stem from confusion about what is meant by the term.[86] In other words, they are only disagreements based on differences in definition. According to Mipham, if one refutes the existence of *ālaya (kun gzhi)* on the basis that it establishes a consciousness that is separate from the six consciousnesses, then this descends into absurdity, positing two distinct mindstreams in a single person. The only point in asserting the storehouse consciousness at all is to distinguish its specific *function* from that of each of the six consciousnesses—and its specific function is to be the repository for karmic seeds and habitual tendencies. (Insofar as conventional existents are defined by their function, it is legitimate to accept the relative existence of the storehouse consciousness.) To avoid the storehouse consciousness by including its function amongt those of the mental consciousness is merely to juggle with words. If we remember that this entire model of cognition and consciousness is only accepted in relative truth, whether one asserts the storehouse consciousness or not, then nothing is gained by rejecting *ālayavijñāna* and nothing is lost by accepting it.

Neither does Mi pham mention the fact that some dGe lugs pa critics of the storehouse

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[85]See Eckel (1987:70). Jñānagarbha opens the SDV by asserting that although the Buddha and scholars like Nāgārjuna explained the Two Truths well, other Buddhists have not, requiring (Jñānagarbha) to set the matter straight. Śāntarakṣita's subcommentary identifies these Buddhists as 'Dharmapāla and others'. See also Keenan (1997:64).
[86]V. pp.46-7.

consciousness reject it on the grounds that it is identical with the *tathāgatagarbha*, and so ontologically distinct from the six consciousnesses.[87] In the particular context of the MAL it is fair to say that Śāntarakṣita does not mention or imply the existence of the *tathāgata-garbha*, and that this issue is extraneous to his concerns. There is no evidence in the MAL or in Mi pham's commentary to identify the storehouse consciousness with the *tathāgata-garbha* ; and no reason to suppose that if Śāntarakṣita did accept *ālayavijñāna*, he took it as anything other than a conventional consciousness functioning as the repository for karmic seeds. In fact, this is the only reason to imagine that Śāntarakṣita accepted the storehouse ground consciousness at all. The fact that the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka school has been associated with the *tathāgatagarbha* theory is due to developments after Śānta-rakṣita. It was his disciple Kamalaśīla who introduced a discussion of *tathāgatagarbha* and *gotra* theories into his *Madhyamakāloka.*[88] Kamalaśīla's move was followed by Dharmamitra, an immediate successor of Haribhadra, in his *Prasphuṭapadā.*[89] However, there is no clear evidence to link Śāntarakṣita or the MAL with these theories.

So on Mi pham's view one of the characteristics of the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis is that it propounds the early scriptural Cittamātra approach to the mind and cognition in relative truth. The conclusion that Mi pham draws from this is perhaps surprising: he claims that the relative assertion of Mind Only is in fact a position common to all Mahāyānists and not exclusive to Yogācāra-Madhyamaka.

> *If anybody were to assert that these phenomenal appearances do not arise from mind, this necessarily implies that one believes that their cause is different from the mind. And since this involves the assertion that beings are bound in* saṃsāra,

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[87]Bransford Wilson (1984:39). rNying ma pas distinguish the Mahāyāna and rDzogs chen meanings of the term *ālaya(vijñāna)*. In rDzogs chen, the *ālaya* is the basis of deluded mind, and therefore not identical with *tathāgatagarbha* or 'pure mind'.
[88]Ruegg (1981:95).
[89]ibid., pp.102-3.

> *or delivered from it, through causes other than their own minds, it will doubtless lead one to fall into extreme views. It is therefore established step by step that if there is no external creator and no external world, appearances are merely mental. This assertion that the relative world is 'mind only' is established as a general Mahāyāna view.*[90]

If this is the case (and more discussion would be needed to establish that it is the case[91]) one might well ask why other Mādhyamikas do not openly accept Cittamātra in relative truth. Mi pham's answer is that Candrakīrti, in particular, emphasizes reasoning establishing ultimate truth in his *Madhyamakāvatāra*, whereas Śāntarakṣita emphasizes the approximate absolute in the MAL.[92] Nevertheless, even Prāsaṅgikas accept conventional phenomena as dependent arisings *(rkyen nyid 'di pa)*, and whenever they reason on the relative level they accept the twelve interdependent links of existence, and so forth. Thus, they show that phenomena arise dependently through the power of the pure or impure mind, so for Mi pham even Candrakīrti does not refute Cittamātra in relative truth.

VIII.3.4 Summary

It has been shown that Śāntarakṣita propounds an internalist theory of the mind that includes aspected cognition, self-awareness and eight consciousnesses in a manner that is acceptable to a Mādhyamika. Tibetan dGe lugs pa critiques of these concepts have been

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[90]V p.41. gal te su zhig srid pa'i snang ba 'di rnams rang sems las ma byung bar smra na de'i rgyu sems las logs su 'dod dgos la/ de ltar na gang zag gi sems 'khor bar bcing grol gyi rgyu gzhan khas blangs pas gdon mi za bar mu stegs kyi grub mthar ltung bar 'gyur ro/ des na byed po gzhan med cing phyi don med par sems kyi snang ba tsam du'ang rim gyis 'grub pas ni// tha snyad sems tsam du 'dod pa 'di theg chen spyi lugs la grub pa yin no/

[91]This point has been discussed by Williams (1988:43), who links the theories of *ālayavijñāna* and *svasaṃvedana*, and dGe lugs pa refutations of them in relative truth, and shows a startling lack of scriptural evidence in Indian sources to justify such a refutation. Only Candrakīrti's MAV 6.73 rejects *svasaṃvedana* in relative truth, and as we saw above the meaning he ascribes to this is not that of reflexive awareness. Since both these theories are characteristic of Cittamātra, and their conventional refutation is unestablished in Indian sources, it is reasonable for Mi pham to assert that Cittamātra theories of mind are acceptable in relative truth for Mahāyāna Buddhism.

[92]V pp.42-43. See Chapter IX for an examination of the Two Truths in the MAL. It is interesting to note that Mi pham cites Candrakīrti and him alone as a source for this view, in the light of the evidence mentioned in note 34 above.

found not to apply in Śāntarakṣita's case. His general philosophy of mind, then, as outlined, appears coherent. Yet even if we cannot find fault with Śāntarakṣita, as Dreyfus (1997:402) states there are a number of unanswered questions in the presentation so far. If self-awareness is cognition, does it have an object? And if it does not, in what sense can it be called cognition? What exactly is the nature of the aspects appearing to perception? And how do they relate to the objects that produce them (in Sautrāntika)? Furthermore, what is the relation between subjective and objective aspects of consciousness? We will now look at the way Śāntarakṣita deals with such questions in the MAL. His analysis is an example of how he added to the continuing tradition of Dharmakīrti, since Dignāga and Dharmakīrti did not themselves clarify these questions. Detailed philosophical exploration of the issues occurred only later on, in Tibet, and must fall outside the purview of this study. It is nevertheless interesting to note how influential Śāntarakṣita's view was for Tibetan commentators. As late as the 14th century, the Sa skya scholar gYag ston sangs rgyas dpal defended the reflexive interpretation of self-awareness in a manner reminiscent of the MAL.[93]

VIII.4 Epistemological debates

VIII.4.1 Non-pluralists, half-eggists and equalists

There are three basic presentations in Buddhist philosophy of how aspected perception knows an object, those of the Non-Pluralists *(sna tshogs gnyis med pa)*, the Half-Eggists *(sgo nga phyed tshal ba)* and the Equalists *(gzung 'dzin grang mnyam pa)*.[94] In general, all three are common to both Sautrāntika and Cittamātra, although some dGe lugs pas assert

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[93]rang rig pa'ang rig bya rig byed gnyis su phye ba'i rang rig pa ma yin gyi bem po las log nas rig par skyes tsam de nyid yin no/ des na rang rig la yul med do/ "As for self-awareness it is not the type of self-awareness in which cognizer and cognized are distinguished, but it is the very [nature of consciousness] being merely produced as awareness that is different from matter. Therefore, self-awareness has no object." *sde bdun gyi dgongs 'grel tshad ma rigs pa'i gter gyi de kho na nyid gsal bar byed pa rigs pa'i 'od stong 'phro ba*, Delhi, 1992, 299.4-5. Cited in Dreyfus (1997:402-3).

[94]See Klein (1997:108-110) for a dGe lugs pa presentation of these positions. The following summary is based on Klein.

there is no Half-Eggist Sautrāntika position.[95]

a) The Non-Pluralists maintain that the many aspects of a given object appear to a single consciousness simultaneously, and that this consciousness takes on all such aspects. Some Sautrāntika scholars are said to be Sequential Non-Pluralists, holding that these aspects appear sequentially and not simultaneously.

b) The Half-Eggists[96] assert that only a single aspect—for example, a general aspect like a table or a multi-coloured cloth— appears to a single consciousness, and that this consciousness is generated only into that aspect. They maintain that although only a single general aspect is cast, the consciousness is still able to see the separate colours / shapes and so on, because it does not follow that only something which casts its aspect is capable of being seen. The appearance of the individual colours/ shapes and so on will be weak whereas the collection of colours etc. will be strong.

c) The Equalists assert that whatever number of aspects exist in a table or other object, that same number of aspects are cast to the perceiving consciousness. Some Equalists also assert that there are as many simultaneous consciousnesses as there are appearing aspects; others that a single consciousness is generated into as many aspects as are cast toward it.

We can see from this description of the three positions that three main issues are at stake. First, what is the numerical relationship between the aspects appearing to perception and the cognitive consciousness(es) they generate? Second, do the many aspects cast by an object appear to perception simultaneously or sequentially? And third, does perception

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[95]ibid.

[96]According to the contemporary rNying ma scholar Khe tsun zang bo rin po che, the Half-Eggists are so called because they assert that subject and object are like two halves of an egg. However, the explanation given by dKon mchog 'jig med dbang po is that they are half like Sautrāntikas, in that they assert that an eye consciousness and its object are different entities, and half like Cittamātrins because they assert that the eye consciousness and its object are of the nature of the mind. Both explanations are reported by Klein (1998:237, n.60).

actually apprehend the object directly and completely or not? As Anne Klein remarks, it would be interesting to carry out targeted experiments to clarify these questions once and for all, since these days they cannot be properly debated without recourse to empirical evidence.[97] It is therefore not our intention to argue in favour of one or other of these views philosophically. The only issue that is relevant to this study is to decide which option Śāntarakṣita favoured and this, as Mi pham explains, is another subject of sectarian controversy.

> *If it is asked which among these three is conventionally accepted in the present treatise, dGe lugs pa scholars will argue that all [treatises on] valid cognition, including this one, agree in accepting the Non-Pluralist [position]. Generally, when turning inward, thinking of the mere continuity of cognition in terms of self-awareness, there may well be occasions on which it is conventionally appropriate that multiple appearances are non-dual as the mind. Yet in the present [context] of the three [options, Non-Pluralism] is not just that. It is to be understood here as [referring to] an apprehension of aspects by way of their dichotomy [with cognitions], so it is extremely unreasonable. In this system, it is only the Equalist [view] that is established by unimpaired valid cognition in relative truth. Personally, I assert exactly this [too], and this is also the intention of the text.*[98]

Mi pham counters dGe lugs pa interpretations of the MAL which, he says, treat it as a standard epistemological text. He argues that the Equalist position is upheld by Śāntarak-ṣita, not the Non-Pluralist position, and goes on to explain why the Equalist position is the most cogent. Critics of Equalism charge that according to scripture and to Dharmakīrti, it is impossible for there to arise two co-emergent cognitions of concordant type *(shes pa*

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[97]Klein (1997:237, n.63).

[98]C p.198. gzhung 'dir tha snyad du de gsum gyi nang nas gang bzhed ce na/ dge ldan gyi mkhas pa rnams ni tshad ma dang 'di kun mthun par sna tshogs gnyis med par bzhed ces gsungs kyang/ spyir kha nang lta rang rig gi dbang du byas nas shes rgyud tsham la bsams na/ snang ba sna tshogs sems su gnyis med ces pa de'i tha snyad rung ba'i skabs tsam zhig yod mod kyi/ su gsum po'i skabs 'dir ni de tsam min par zla'i stobs kyis rnam pa 'dzin tshul la go dgos pas na shin tu mi 'thad pas lugs 'dir ni tha snyad kyi tshad mas grub cing gnod pa med pa ni gzung 'dzin grangs mnyam pa go kho nar mthong bas bdag ni de kho na ltar smra la/ gzhung gi dgongs pa'ang 'di yin te/

gnyis lhan cig 'byung bar mi srid pa), and that therefore the Equalist position is untenable. But Mi pham urges that the authoritative sources from which this principle is taken are referring to the impossibility for a cognition to arise at the same time as its antidote, the two being conflicting opposites. Such does not apply to cognition generally. Mi pham therefore implies that for Śāntarakṣita it is possible for several cognitions to occur simultaneously. He goes on to strengthen this idea by relating it to the dual aspects of cognition posited by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, namely perception and inference.

> *In the present context, the distinctions between conceptual and non-conceptual cognitions [tend to] become mixed up, and it is rare to find someone who speaks correctly. [Nevertheless,] in non-conceptual cognition the aspects of the objects do in fact appear separate and not as one. Whatever is one cannot appear as separate [identities], for if it did appear [in this way] mind and its object would not be in harmony. It is necessary for cognition to be in accordance with the appearance, and for the appearance to be in accordance with the object.*[99]

Dignāga asserted that perception is non-conceptual, while conceptual cognition takes the form of inference.[100] What Mi pham is saying here is that for cognition to be valid 1) the object, 2) the aspect(s) it casts in our minds, and 3) our non-conceptual perception of these aspects, must all correspond in a fundamental way. If this were not the case, the cognitive process would contain an inherent distortion. Given this principle, it follows that the number of characteristics of the object must correspond to the number of aspects it casts toward consciousness, and in turn, the number of aspects must correspond to the number of consciousnesses generated. Such a model safeguards the accuracy and diversity of knowledge. Mi pham's interpretation is justified by several points in the MAL:

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[99]C p.200. de la skabs 'dir phal cher rtog pa dang rtog med kyi byed pa 'dres te tshul bzhin smra ba dkon par 'dug na'ang/ don du rtog med kyi shes ngor yul gyi rnam pa tha dad la gcig tu mi snang/ gcig la tha dad du snang mi srid de/ snang na blo don mthun du mi 'gyur pas na don ji ltar snang ba ltar shes pa'am de ltar 'gyur dgos pa ni/

[100]*Pramāṇasamuccaya*, I.3c.

[23] Consciousness should not be unitary, since it is related to a plurality of aspects. Otherwise how can the identity of the two be explained?
rnam pa rnams dang ma bral bas// rnam shes gcig pur mi 'gyur ro//
de lta min na 'di gnyis la// gcig ces ji skad brjod par bya//

[26] Even if we consider only conceptual cognitions, they do not cognize [aspects] sequentially. Since they do not last long they are like all cognitions, occurring rapidly [in succession].
yid kyi rtog pa 'ba zhig la'ang// rim du shes par mi 'gyur ro//
ring du gnas pa ma yin pas// blo rnams kun kyang mgyogs 'byung 'dra//

[27] Therefore objects are not apprehended sequentially, even thought it appears as if [a series of] separate aspects are apprehended all at once.
de phyir yul rnams thams cad la// rim gyis 'dzin par mi 'gyur gyi//
rnam pa dag ni tha dad ltar// cig car 'dzin par snang bar 'gyur//

Mi pham makes the same points as Śāntarakṣita, that is: the cognizing consciousness must correspond to the object of cognition, and it is therefore untenable to assert that one is single and the other is plural. Both conceptual cognition and non-conceptual perception separately cognize the object all at once. This is theoretically possible because this system holds that several co-emergent cognitions can arise in the mind simultaneously, provided they are not opposites the one of the other.

In an illuminating comment on this entire debate, the contemporary rNying ma scholar Dzi gar kong sprul rin po che has suggested that there is an underlying misunderstanding that gave rise to the debate in the first place.[101] Although perception is held to be non-conceptual, nevertheless a multiplicity of data can be perceived simultaneously. Some scholars have considered that this situation is untenable since differentiating between a number of things is a conceptual act.[102] If perception is non-conceptual, then even if it were the case that a multiplicity of data were being apprehended at once the perceiver

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[101]Oral comments made to the present author in September 2000.
[102]In Dignāga and Dharkamīrti's systems, the distinction between perception and inference is fundamental. Perception is non-conceptual while inference is rational and conceptual. Furthermore, perception merely reflects things as they are without interpreting them, while conception categorizes the objects perceived and synthesizes them. One of the characteristics of concepts is that they differentiate one thing from another, and according to the Buddhist theory of *apoha*, identify and name x by eliminating all non-x. See Dreyfus (1997:217ff).

would not be capable of distinguishing one element from another, so the result would be an unhelpful soup of sensibilia. And if the various data cannot be distinguished non-conceptually, then *it is as though* one were perceiving just one object. Dzi gar kong sprul rin po che asserts that on the rNying ma view he follows, it is considered acceptable to claim that we perceive a multiplicity of things simultaneously without any confusion, and indeed it is this clear and complex perception that the conceptual mind interprets in the second moment. If perception were not complex and clear, on what basis would the conceptual mind be able to articulate clear and complex knowledge? The rNying ma viewpoint therefore highlights the capacity of the non-conceptual mind to know, and does not ascribe clarity exclusively to the conceptual mind.

As we hinted earlier, this entire discussion may be of little interest in the contemporary context since it is not based on empirical evidence. At best, Śāntarakṣita's position can be seen as consistent with his overall argument based on the mutual exclusion of one and many. However, Mi pham draws out the significance of this discussion in terms of important implications for the theory of mind in general, and this is where the interest of the debate lies for him. He asserts that Śāntarakṣita's position means that there is no problem with the idea that the storehouse consciousness matures into separate identities when its diverse aspects appear as abode, body and enjoyments. The unacceptable consequence of having a plurality of storehouse consciousnesses is thus avoided.

> *What is the purpose and what is the quality [of such an argument, i.e. upholding the Equalist theory in relative truth]? There will not be the fault of the storehouse consciousness of maturation turning into separate [identities] when its various aspects appear as the diversity of abode, body and enjoyments. Therefore it is superior to the view that you hold.*[103]

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[103]C p.199-200. dgos pa yon tan ci yod ce na/ rnam smin kun gzhi'i shes pa gnas lus longs spyod sna tshogs su snang ba'i rnam pa tha dad pas tha dad par 'gyur ba'i nyes pa ni mi bskyed pas khyod kyi khas len tshul las 'phags so/

Although the Half-Eggist and Non-Pluralist theories are refuted both ultimately and relatively, the MAL refutes the Equalist theory ultimately but accepts it relatively. This means that the non-Mādhyamika defence of the Equalist position is also refuted insofar as it asserts any factor of the cognition process to be truly and independently existent. Śāntarakṣita's acceptance of the Equalist view is made strictly within the bounds of Madhyamaka ontology.

VIII.4.2 *Sākārajñānavādins* and *Nirākārajñānavādins*

VIII.4.2.a) Overview of the issues

All three of the positions discussed immediately above are held only by those Buddhists who assert that knowledge is endowed with the aspect *(ākāra; rnam pa)* of an object appearing to perception. Indian epistemology involved an important debate between those schools which held that knowledge is endowed with aspects, the Sākāravādins or Satyākāravādins, and those who did not: the Nirākāravādins or Alīkākāravādins. Sākāravāda is maintained by Sāṃkhya and Vedānta as well as some Buddhist schools, while Nirākāravāda is held by the Nyāyavaiśeṣika, Mīmāṁsaka and Jaina schools as well as by certain Buddhists.[104] Within Buddhism, the Vaibhāṣikas are regarded as nirākāravādins, while Sautrāntika and Yogācāra are sākāravādins. However, controversy emerged within the Yogācāra school itself so that Yogācārins include proponents of both positions. Although the sources of their views are traced back to Asaṅga and Dignāga respectively, the dispute seems to have begun with Dharmapāla (sākāravadin) and Sthiramati (nirākāravādin) and apparently developed after Dharmakīrti.[105] Śāntarakṣita's historical position within the controversy is therefore an early one, and with hindsight he can perhaps be credited with

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[104]See 'Controversy between the sākāra- and nirākāra-vādins of the yogācāra school—some materials' by Y. Kajiyama, in JIBS, XIV.1 (1965) pp.429-418. And also Kajiyama (1989:62, n.148).
[105]ibid.

appreciating how significant the debate could be by devoting so much of the MAL to a discussion of it. The main proponents of these two epistemological positions came later: for example, Dharmakīrti of Suvarṇadvīpa[106] and his disciples Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti were sākāravādins; while Ratnākaraśānti[107], a nirākāravādin, seems to have followed Śāntarakṣita.[108]

According to Ratnākaraśānti, both these views were also held within the Madhyamaka school too.[109] And indeed more recently, the Yogācāra Svātantrika Mādhyamikas have been subdivided into Sākāravādins *(rnam bden pa dang mthun pa'i dbu ma pa)* and Nirākāravādins *(rnam brdzun pa dang mthun pa'i dbu ma pa)* by Tibetan doxographers such as dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po and 'Jam dbyangs bshad pa (1648-1722).[110] This Tibetan distinction is based on Indian sources, one frequently cited instance of which is Sahajavajra's *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* which names Śāntarakṣita as the proponent of the Sākāra subschool and Kambala as that of the Nirākāra subschool.[111] We therefore have evidence that Śāntarakṣita was regarded as a Sākāravādin in India by the 11th century.[112] However, neither Ye shes sde nor bLo gsal mention the distinction in relation to Madhyamaka al-

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[106]Also known as Dharmāpala (Chos skyong) of Suvarṇadvīpa, he is known as the master of Atiśa (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna) who lived c.982-1054. See Ruegg (1981:110).

[107]Ruegg (1981:122) cites the *Deb ther sngon po* as his source for stating that Ratnākaraśānti lived c.1000, was based in Vikramaśīlā, and was a contemporary of Jñānaśrīmitra, Prajñākaramati, Nāḍapāda and Maitrīpāda. Ruegg classifies him as a proponent of a Vijñapti-Madhyamaka synthesis.

[108]This is the view of S. Yamaguchi, published in Japanese and cited by Kajiyama (1965).

[109]PPU 165 a 4ff. Cited in Kajiyama (1965:419).

[110]See the discussion on these two subschools in Nagashima (2002), chapters 1,2 and 4.

[111]P. 3099 mi 180a5 ff. **yang na rnam bcas ma yin rnam med min//** zhes bya ba ni rnam pa dang bcas pa' idbu ma dang/ rnam pas med pa'i dbu ma gsal bar bya ba'i gtso bo'i di dag go// gang gi phyir zhi ba 'tsho'i zhal snga nas la sogs pas rnam pa dang bcas pa'i dbu ma nyid khas len par byed de/ "'Neither Sākāra nor Nirākāra' *(Tattvadaśaka v.2a)* means that the Sākāra-Madhyamaka and the Nirākāra-Madhyamaka are clarified as the two main [schools]. Accordingly, Śāntarakṣita and others among the early [masters] accept the Sākāra-Madhyamaka...and the Nirākāra-Madhyamaka is accepted by Kambala and others."

Kambala, or Kambalapāda, is regarded as a Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika of the Nirmala-Alīkākāra branch (Ruegg, 1981:106). He was an approximate contemporary of Jñānagarbha according to Tāranātha (fol. 99A).

It is interesting to note the discrepancy between Śāntarakṣita's classification as a sākāravādin in this passage, and Yamaguchi's suggestion that the nirākāravādin Ratnākāraśānti followed Śāntarakṣita's approach. Śāntarakṣita's actual position may be more ambiguous than either of these sources allow, as we shall see later in the present Chapter.

[112]Sahajavajra was a direct disciple of Advayavajra, who himself was a contemporary of Atīśa (982-1054).

though the difference is made by bLo gsal in connection with the Yogācāra school.[113] Indeed, even dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po discusses the issues raised by the two subschools only in his presentation of Cittamātra, while his Yogācāra-Madhyamaka section merely alludes to it in passing.[114]

The issue at stake here is the nature of the aspect *(rnam pa; ākāra)* that appears to perception. dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po explains that the precise meaning of 'aspect' in this context is the mode of appearance of the object *(yul; viṣaya)*.[115] This is not merely a technical discussion. The significance of the debate in Buddhism lies in its implications for an understanding of liberation. An emancipated mind is said to have acquired non-conceptual, supermundane knowledge (*nirvikalpakajñāna*), so the question is: if cognition occurs for a buddha, is it not the case that cognition endowed with aspects is incompatible with non-conceptual knowledge? And can it be acceptable to have a theory of cognition that applies only to beings afflicted by delusion and dualistic apprehension? Our answer to this question will determine the way we see the essential nature of the mind.

Mokṣākaragupta presents the rationale behind the debate on aspects as a concern about the identity of the cause and effect of cognition.[116] The concern is that a resultant cognition should be of the same nature as that which produces it. The Sautrāntika Sākāravādin position is described as follows:

> *From an object such as blue is produced twofold [determinate] knowledge: one is the aspect or concept of blue, the other consists of the consciousness of blue. The knowledge consisting of the aspect of blue is [determined as] distinct from the aspect of non-blue, and is regarded as the instrument of knowledge. The knowledge consisting in the consciousness of blue is also [determined as] distinct from the consciousness of non-blue, and is the knowledge as resultant* (pramiti). *This is the same as the effect [of cognition].*[117]

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[113]See Mimaki (1982:99-105) where these two subschools of Yogācāra are discussed in the *bLo gsal grub mtha'*.
[114]Sopa and Hopkins (1989:250ff; 284).
[115]ibid., p.251.
[116]*Tarkabhāṣā* 22.17 in Kajiyama (1989:60ff).
[117]ibid., p.61. I have changed 'image' for 'aspect', otherwise the translation is Kajiyama's.

The Sautrāntikas consider that cognition is produced by the aspect appearing to cognition, which is itself of the nature of cognition. Indeed they go further and assert that knowledge is necessarily endowed with an image or aspect, implying that aspectless cognition is impossible.[118] This principle is authoritatively expressed and argued by Dharmakīrti:

> *How can a [momentary] thing which exists at a different time [from that of the direct perception grasping it] be an object of direct perception? We reply: philosophers recognize that the essence of a sense-object consists in its being a cause capable of leaving its image (or aspect) in consciousness.*[119]

The Sākāravādins consider that a blue patch that appears as a gross object does in fact exist in the manner it appears; in other words, the aspect 'blue' pertains to an object 'blue'. On the other hand the Nirākāravādins do not consider that the aspect 'blue' pertains to an object 'blue', and claim that the assertion that 'blue' exists as an external object is false. For them, the aspect pertains to cognition and not to an external object, and results from *vāsanā*-s *(bag chags)* that are latencies or karmic seeds embedded in the mindstream. Both subschools agree that blue appears as blue to an eye consciousness apprehending blue; and also that blue appears—falsely—as a gross object to an eye consciousness apprehending blue. But they differ in their understanding of how ignorance enters into the cognition process. Sākāravādins assert that the appearance of blue as an external object to an eye consciousness apprehending blue is tainted by ignorance, whereas an appearance of blue as blue and an appearance of blue as a gross object are not. Nirākāravādins hold that all three of these types of appearance are tainted by ignorance. In summary, Sākāravādins can be defined as those who assert that the appearance of a gross object to a sense consciousness exists as it appears, while Nirākāravādins are defined as those who hold that it does not.[120] Or, to put it another way, the former assert that non-dual *vijñāna* contains an objective aspect, and the latter do not.[121]

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[118]ibid., p.61-2; *Tarkabhāṣā* 23.7-8.
[119]PV III, v.248, Derge ed. 158 b.1. bhinnakālaṁ kathaṁ grāhyam iti cet grāhyatāṁ vihuḥ, hetutvam eva yuktijñā jñānākārārpaṇakṣamam.
[120]Sopa and Hopkins (1989:251-2).
[121]Ruegg (1981:92).

Nirākāravādins, for their part, cite Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasaṁgraha* as their authoritative source.

> *If the object of cognition were established as objectively existing there would be no non-conceptual knowledge* (nirvikalpakajñāna; shes pa rtog pa med)*; without this it is not possible to attain buddhahood.*[122]
>
> *When non-conceptual knowledge is acquired, no objects appear; therefore one must understand that objects do not exist, and since they are non-existent the aspects* (rnam pa) *of cognition are also non-existent.*[123]

It is interesting to note just how close the Nirākāravāda view is to certain interpretations of Vedānta where *māyā* or the illusory nature of reality is held to have no ontological basis whatsoever and to be fundamentally non-existent.[124] Such a view, termed the 'soft' line of Vedānta by O'Flaherty, holds that everything is unreal in distinction to the 'hard' line which holds that everything is real but we mistake it for what is unreal. This 'soft' line rests on the idea that the entire known universe is a magical illusion created by God.

> *For the* Yogavāsiṣṭha, *'delusion'* (moha *in Sanskrit)—the 'mistaking' of a rope for a snake—is ultimately subject to correction, when we discover that it is 'contrary to fact' (that there is a rope there); this correction then becomes the vehicle by which we free ourselves from the far more pervasive and therefore far more difficult to dispel 'illusion'—the* māyā *where, 'in spite of appearances', there is ultimately nothing there at all.*[125]

There seems to be a very fine line between this 'soft' Vedāntic view and the Nirākāravāda view that one should realize that there are no objects whatsoever in cognition. "In spite of appearances", and specifically in spite of the appearance of aspects in consciousness, there are ultimately no aspects there at all. This parallel highlights how the Nirākāravāda view might easily entail the position that aspects are actually non-existent, leading, of course, to unacceptable consequences. And yet one can appreciate the Nirākāra viewpoint

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[122]Lamotte (1973:I.31 and II.105): *Mahāyānasaṁgraha* II.14b-c; don ni don tu grub gyur na// shes pa rtog pa med mi 'gyur// de med pas na sang rgyas nyid// 'thob par 'thad pa ma yin no// Also VIII, 20c.
[123]ibid., I:31 and II:107; *Mahāyānasaṁgraha* II.14b-f. mi rtog ye shes rgyu ba la// don kun snang ba med phyir yang// don med khong du chud par bya// de med pas na rnam rig med// Also VIII 20 f.
[124]See "Illusion and Reality in the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*" by Wendy O'Flaherty in *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, January 1981, pp.104-123.
[125]ibid., p.116.

as a soteriological device to help the meditator/philosopher abandon grasping to the existence of aspects. The non-existence of aspects is therefore an antidote to the belief in their existence. It is then but a short step to viewing them as interdependent.

Finally, in appraising the sākāravāda/nirākāravāda debate, it is worth noting the irony of both positions. Whereas Sautrāntika developed the theory of aspects to counter theories of direct, unmediated perception, when aspected cognition is considered within an internalist framework cognition becomes unmediated once again. For Cittamātrins, there are really no external objects in the equation. Cognition happens simply between consciousness and aspects appearing to consciousness, and so one could say that on this view, there occurs unmediated cognition of the aspect. Since the chief refutation of the Vaibhāśika interpretation of unmediated cognition relied on the difference in nature between object and subject, that refutation does not apply on the internalist model. There is no reason to object to cognition being unmediated as long as it is entirely mental in nature.

VIII.4.2.b) Śāntarakṣita's position

Although, as we have seen, Śāntarakṣita is considered a Sākāravādin by Indian and Tibetan scholars, in the MAL and in the TS he employs arguments against both the views under consideration. His objection to the Sautrāntika Sākāravādin theory rests on his refutation of the true existence of external objects, which we have already examined in detail, entailing that external objects being non-existent cannot be apprehended.[126]This objection is reinforced by the principle previously examined above, which is that mind and matter being of opposite natures, it is not possible for mind to have a cognitive connection with matter.[127] Neither is it the case, claims Śāntarakṣita, that consciousness apprehends the

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[126]TS and TSP 1998. See Chapter VII above.
[127]This argument is also found at TS and TSP 2032-3.

imprint that an object leaves in the consciousness since objects are inactive and can only rest within their own nature.[128] There is therefore no way that an object can 'reach out' to the apprehending consciousness or somehow transform itself into an imprint in consciousness.[129] Consciousness can only cognize objects that are of the nature of consciousness. All these arguments have already been presented in connection with self-awareness.

In addition, Śāntarakṣita counters the Sākāra position by pointing out that the aspect that appears to perception can be shown not to accord with the object to which we think it is linked.[130] He illustrates this argument with examples of visual distortion. When we see our face in the mirror, the size and position of the reflection are not those of our face: if the mirror is small the reflected face will be smaller than our face, and if we are facing north the reflection will be facing south. Similarly, trees reflected in a clear lake will appear upside down. From this one can conclude that cognition does not apprehend either an object itself, or an image or aspect that is like an object; rather it apprehends an aspect that is different from the apparently related object. This therefore destroys a principle fundamental to the Sākāra theory: that the aspect and the object inherently correspond the one to the other.[131]

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[128]TS and TSP 2034-5.

[129]In Buddhism, it is mind that is the active principle, not matter. As Elizabeth Napper (Lati Rinbochay, 1980:15) notes, "Consciousness (*jñāna; shes pa*), awareness (*buddhi; blo*) and knower (*saṃvedana; rig pa*) are synonymous; they are the broadest terms among those dealing with the mind...These terms should be understood in an active sense because minds are momentary consciousnesses which are active agents of knowing. In Buddhism mind is not conceived to be merely a general reservoir of information or just the brain mechanism, but to be individual moments of knowing, the continuum of which makes up our sense of knowing."

[130]TS and TSP 2081. In TS 1999, Śāntarakṣita actually distinguishes three positions on this topic, not two: *nirākāravāda* according to which knowledge is not endowed with the aspect of an object; *sākāravāda* that holds the object is cognized by knowledge endowed with an aspect that corresponds to the object; and *anya nirbhāsajñānavāda*, holding that the object is cognized by knowledge endowed with an aspect that is different from that of the object. His examples of visual distortion fit this third category.

It should be noted that examples of visual distortion were cited above as key arguments in the refutation of externalist models of cognition.

[131]The third option suggested by Śāntarakṣita, namely that cognition is endowed with aspects that do not conform precisely to the object, appears to be that which fits closest to contemporary empirical evidence, exemplified by optics where the image that appears to cognition is inverted or otherwise distorted.

In the MAL, Śāntarakṣita's objection to the Sākāra subschool of Cittamātra is based on the difficulty involved in holding that knowledge is unitary or multiple.

> **MAL 44: [The Yogācārins hold that] the aspects of deluded [cognition] appear [in our consciousness] produced by the ripening of latencies in the individual continuum from the beginningless past. Yet their intrinsic nature is like an illusion since they are the result of error.**
> *ci ste thog ma med rgyud kyi// bag chags smin pas sprul pa yi//*
> *rnam pa dag ni snang ba yang// nor bas sgyu ma'i rang bzhin 'dra//*
>
> **MAL 45: Even though we appreciate this [doctrine], let us consider whether these entities [i.e. the aspects] exist ultimately or are agreeable and acceptable only as long as they are not investigated critically.**
> *de dge 'on kyang de dag gi// dngos de yang dag nyid dam ci//*
> *'on te ma brtags gcig pu na// dga' bar khas len 'di bsam mo//*
>
> **MAL 46: If [the aspects were] ultimately real, either consciousness would be multiple or the aspects would be unitary. If consciousness and its aspects had contradictory natures they would definitely be distinct.**
> *gal te yang dag rnam par shes// du mar 'gyur ro yang na ni//*
> *de dag gcig 'gyur 'gal ldan pas// gdon mi za bar so sor 'gyur//*
>
> **MAL 47: If aspects are not distinct [from consciousness] it is difficult to refute consequences such as with [aspects of] movement and rest etc., where a single [aspect of] movement would cause everything to move, and so on.**
> *rnam pa tha dad ma yin na// g.yo dang mi g.yo la sogs pa//*
> *gcig gis thams cad g.yo la sogs// thal bar 'gyur te lan gdab dka' //*
>
> **MAL 48: Even in a theory that maintains the true existence of external objects, the same applies. If the aspects are inseparable [from consciousness], one cannot escape [the fact that] everything would be reduced to a single phenomenon.**
> *phyi rol don gyi tshul la yang// de ltar rnam par ma bral na//*
> *gcig gi chos su thams cad kyang// 'jug par 'gyur te bzlog pa med//*

These points are very similar to the arguments used in relation to the Half-Eggists, Non-Dualists and Equalists. The problem lies in explaining how aspects, being numerous, can relate to the consciousness, since Sākāravādins hold that the aspects appearing to cognition truly exist. The 'neither one nor many' argument shows this position to be untenable. The contradiction will be unavoidable in any system that posits either the true establishment of consciousness, or that of aspects, or both. For this reason, it is vital to distinguish

clearly between actuality and imputation in the context of the MAL.[132]

Not content with his refutation of Sākāravāda, Śāntarakṣita goes on to expose the weaknesses of the Nirākāravādins in verses 52-60 of the MAL. We will recall that according to Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, knowledge without aspects is impossible.

MAL 52: [The Nirākāravadins hold that consciousness] does not intrinsically possess aspects, but by dint of an error they appear to consciousness even though consciousness is not endowed with aspects ultimately.
ci ste ngo bo nyid du de'i// rnam pa 'di dag med pa ste//
yang dag tu na rnam med pa'i// rnam par shes la nor bas snang//

MAL 53: If [aspects] do not [ultimately] exist, how can they be perceived so clearly? Cognition, if different from the entity of [aspects], would not be like that.[133]
gal te med na ji lta bur// de dag 'di ltar gsal bar tshor//
de yi dngos las tha dad pa'i// shes pa de 'dra ma yin no//

MAL 54: Thus, when there is no aspect present in the knowledge [of something], there will be no cognition of it. Just as [we do not feel] pleasure when there is no pleasure, or [see] white in [that which is] not white, and so forth.
'di ltar gang la dngos gang med// de la de shes yod ma yin//
bde ba min la bde sogs dang// dkar ba rnams la'ang mi dkar bzhin//

MAL 55: The term 'cognition' is not appropriate to [perception of an unreal] aspect because this is contrary to [the nature of] cognition, like a sky-flower and so on.
rnam pa 'di la shes pa'i don// dngos su 'thad pa ma yin te//
shes pa'i bdag dang bral ba'i phyir// rnam mkha'i me tog la sogs bzhin//

MAL 56: Since that which is non-existent has no causal efficiency, like the horns of a horse, [an aspect that is non-existent] is not efficient even figuratively because it cannot produce knowledge of its own appearance.
med pa nus pa med pas na// gdags pa'ang mi rung rta ru bzhin//
bdag snang shes pa mi skyed la// nus pa rung ba ma yin no//

MAL 57: So how is it that that which is definitely felt to be existent is related to cognition? [Being] non-existent [the aspect] is not of the nature [of cognition] nor is it produced from it.
gang phyir de yod nges tshor ba// shes dang 'brel ba ci zhig yod//
bdag med de yi bdag nyid dang// de las byung ba ma yin no//

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[132] C. p.268.

[133]There is nothing in the root text or in Mi pham's commentary that justifies the interpretation given to this verse by Ichigō (1985:CXL) who translates: "If (images) are unreal, how can they be perceived so clearly [even by an ordinary man]? His knowledge is not the same (as non-dual or supramundane) knowledge. The latter is distinct from (the knowledge that cognizes) the appearing images."

MAL 58: If [an aspect] has no cause, why does it arise at different times? If it is endowed with a cause, how can its dependent nature *(paratantra-svabhāva)* be avoided?
rgyu med na ni gang zhig gis// res 'ga' 'byung ba 'di rung 'gyur//
rgyu dang ldan na gang zhig gis// gzhan gyi dbang las bzlog par 'gyur//

MAL 59: If [the aspect] did not [truly] exist, cognition would still occur in the absence of aspects. [Yet] a consciousness like a pure crystal sphere has never been experienced (*or* can never perceive anything).
de med na ni shes de yang// rnam pa med pa nyid kyis 'gyur//
shel sgong dag pa 'dra ba yin// shes pa rab tu tshor ba med//

MAL 60: If it is said that [the aspect] is cognized on account of delusion, is it different from that which is contingent upon delusion? If it arises by the power of that [delusion] then it does indeed have a dependent nature.
'di ni 'khrul bas shes she na// de ci 'khrul la rag las sam//
de yi mthu yis byung na ni// de yang gzhan gyi dbang nyid do//

The Nirākāra position is that the nature of consciousness is devoid of aspects and likened to a pure crystal.[134] Even though it is conceded that aspects do appear to the mind, they are not accorded any truth or reality; in fact, they only arise on account of our delusion. This implies that not only is the object to which the aspect apparently refers merely an illusion, but also that aspects are in no way inherent to consciousness itself. Mi pham explains that on this view aspects are not mental in nature, and are as illusory as the tufts of floating hair seen by those who suffer from an eye disease.[135]

Śāntarakṣita first refutes this theory by pointing out its contradiction with empirical experience. If the aspects appearing to perception are sensed as clear and distinct by everyone from the infant to the scholar, how is it possible that they are in fact non-existent?[136] The Nirākāra position is flawed with internal contradictions, since on the one hand it does not claim that aspects do not arise at all, and yet it must accept that if they are non-existent they cannot be experienced. In addition, they assert that aspects are false and

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[134]The following analysis of Śāntarakṣita's refutation follows Mi pham's commentary on the above verses.
[135]C. p.280.
[136]C. p.281.

non-existent while cognition is true and truly existent.[137] Furthermore, close investigation will reveal that aspects must necessarily be mental in nature (this was argued earlier in this Chapter).

The Nirākāravādins argue that what appears to perception is merely illusory. But if we consider the traditional example of the tufts of floating hair perceived (mistakenly) by someone with an eye disease, then this position does not make sense. One can acknowledge that although the tufts of hair lack objective existence, this does not in itself contradict the mere experience of hair as such. But if it is claimed that not even the aspects *(rnam pa)* of the appearance of hair tufts exist, then the cognitive experience that arises in the mind in association with these aspects can have no existence whatsoever. In other words, to say that no aspects exist is tantamount to saying that cognition does not occur. This is too broad an implication because it cancels out any difference between true and false knowledge. The position is unacceptable. Mi pham sums up the debate as follows.

> *In short, separate aspects and cognitions are merely distinguished in dependency. One will never succeed in asserting any actual distinction in terms of the existence and non-existence of [either] entity. Aspects* (rnam pa) *are nothing other than simply the clarity and awareness of consciousness to the various objects that are known by the mind. **Apart from the entity of those aspects, such isolated cognition is not** possible under any circumstances. (...)*
>
> *Since it follows that the genuine proponents of Cittamātra are the Sākāravādins, what the Sākāravādins assert is sound. [And yet] as the Nirākāravāda does not hold that external objects are true like the mind, it is a little closer to the truth of emptiness and it forms, as it were, a bridge to Madhyamaka. For that reason it is classified as a higher stage on the gradual path. Nevertheless, since there are important [points in the Nirākāra system] that are conventionally unacceptable, one must only affirm relative truth in accordance with the Sākāra school.*[138]

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[137]Ratnākaraśānti refers to both these arguments in PPU 168, a4 ff, cited in Kajiyama (1965:419-420).

[138]C. p.284. mdor na shes rnam tha dad du ltos nas phye ba tsam yin gyi/ dngos su khyad phyes nas yod

Mi pham reiterates the thrust of Śāntarakṣita's argument, namely that what is untenable is the assertion that either aspects or consciousness exist truly and inherently. If one drops this ontological position, then cognition can be understood in terms of aspects and consciousness where both are merely dependent upon one another. In this way, the Sākāra model can be upheld relatively as a helpful way of explaining the functioning of mind in the cognitive process. Paradoxically, however, the Nirākāra view is closer to the Madhyamaka understanding of emptiness simply because it recognizes the illusory quality of both objects and aspects. The fact that objects and aspects are held to be illusory does not, of course, imply that they are totally non-existent, only that they do not have true existence *(bden pa yod pa)*. Theoretically, then, it would be possible to retain the Nirākāra model of cognition but to modify its underlying ontology so that all the factors in the model (i.e. including consciousness itself) are non-truly existent and mutually dependent. So why did Śāntarakṣita not choose this option? Why did he prefer the Sākāravāda option? What are the "important points" in the Nirākāravāda that Mi pham claims are conventionally unacceptable?

The main problem with the Sākāra view is that arguably it does not take non-conceptual cognition into account, as Asaṅga pointed out above. That is, it does not allow for the possibility of aspectless cognition. The big question, then, is whether the non-conceptual cognition of a liberated being is aspectless or not.[139] When one has overcome the subject/object duality of deluded perception that is characterized by the distinction between the grasper and the grasped, the nature of the knower becomes one with the nature of the

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med cig rnam pa kun tu 'jog mi nus te/ rnam pa shes pa shes pas yul so sor rig pa'i gsal rig gi cha tsam las logs su dbye ba med pas na/ rnam pa **de yi dngos las tha dad pa'i shes pa** yan gar ba **de 'dra** zhig rnam pa kun tu srid pa **ma yin no/** (...) de ltar na sems tsam mtshan nyid pa ni rnam bden pa yin pas rnam bden pa 'di gzhung brling zhing/ rnam brdzun pa phyi dan sems su'ang mi bden par 'dod pas bden stong la cung nye bas dbu ma dang mtshams sbyor lta bu yin pas go rim gyis 'di gong mar bzhag kyang/ tha snyad la mi 'thad pa chen po 'ong bas tha snyad rnam bden pa kho na ltar khas blang bar bya ba yin no/

[139]See section VIII.5.3 below.

known, so does it not follow that in these circumstances there can be no distinction between the consciousness (subject) and the aspects in consciousness (object)? Framed in logical terminology, do we not have a case of the incompatibility of mutual exclusion[140] between non-conceptual cognition and aspected cognition? An argument that can be advanced against the Nirākāravādin defence is one of Mi pham's "important points". If the cognition even of deluded beings is free of truly existing aspects, then why do deluded beings not experience the non-dual cognition of liberated beings? If mind is essentially like a pure crystal, then how can deluded beings possibly fail to ascertain reality in a non-conceptual way? In other words, although Nirākāravāda might account for liberated cognition it does not give an adequate account of deluded cognition, and to be acceptable any Buddhist epistemology has to account for both. Even if it asserts (v.60) that for deluded beings aspects arise from delusion, then it cannot avoid them being of dependent nature *(gzhan dbang nyid)* and so is internally contradictory.

Finally, Śāntarakṣita's refutation of Nirākāravāda is in fact critical to his entire enterprise. If aspects do not truly exist and all that truly exists is the luminous, clear self-awareness of mind, then it can be argued that mind in this system is unitary. And if that is the case, it would not withstand the application of the 'neither one nor many' argument. His acceptance of aspects in knowledge means that mind is arguably not unitary; and his assertion that mind-only does not exist either means that the mind is not truly existent. Both these points are fundamental for the universal pervasion of his argument. If this were not Śāntarakṣita's position, he would be unable to use that single argument throughout the MAL.

Kajiyama (1978:114-143) has noted the same progression of views along the gradual path

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[140]In this case, the mutual exclusion would pertain to the mind *(blo 'gal)* rather than to the object *(don 'gal)* since the discussion concerns two apparently incompatible modes of cognition.

as that mentioned in the commentary by Mi pham.[141] Both are based on Kamalaśīla's first *Bhāvanākrama* which, as we saw in Chapter V above, follows the structure of the MAL closely. According to Kamalaśīla, the Sākāravādins hold aspects or mental images *(rnam pa; ākāra)* to be truly existent, and experience them as real in meditation; while the Nirākāravādins recognize the emptiness quality of mental aspects, and are left asserting only the true existence of the self-illuminating, reflexive nature of mind. It is this, and this alone, that they experience as real in meditation. From here, there is just one more step to take in order to reach the Madhyamaka view, namely to realize that the self-illuminating mind is itself empty too. It is in this sense that Mi pham refers to the Nirākāra view as a bridge to Madhyamaka. Śāntarakṣita does, of course, take this final step from verse 91 to verse 92 of the MAL.

All the remaining refutations of Nirākāravāda (verses 54-60) should be assessed in the light of this framework. Śāntarakṣita argues (v. 54) that if cognition is based on subject and object, and if the Nirākāravādins deny the existence of the object (or its equivalent, the mental aspect) this is untenable because we cannot be left with a subject and no object. Furthermore, according to their theory cognition would actually be impossible (v.55) because it could not take place in either of the only two possible ways: actually or nominally. By actual cognition we mean cognition that arises clear and aware as the aspects of an object. By nominal cognition we mean, according to the externalist view, aspects resembling an object that arise by means of the power of that object and according to the internalist view (v.56) aspects that arise in relation to a non-existent object. If the object is non-existent it cannot produce aspects (or anything else) so this latter view is untenable. If the horns of a horse do not exist, then they are not capable of producing a cognition of their appearance.[142] And similarly, if the aspect is non-existent, as the Nirākāra-

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[141]See Chapter V, Table 2.

[142]rta'i rwa cho la kho rang snang ba'i shes pa bskyed pa'i nus pa med pas/

vādins claim it is, then it cannot produce a cognition that appears clearly and distinctly as in the case of a patch of blue. This refutation is intended to show the absurdity of aspect-less cognition.

If aspects are held to be non-existent, and cognition itself is held to be existent, then the aspects cannot be related to cognition because their natures are opposite (v.57). The logical law regarding the incompatibility of mutual exclusion *(lhan cig mi gnas 'gal)* applies. Furthermore, if it is claimed that aspects have no cause (v.58) then this is inconsistent with the fact that they occur only occasionally. And if it is claimed that aspects do have a cause, then they are dependent and conditioned but not non-existent. And in the context of Cittamātra, since the only cause that is accepted is cognition itself it will be impossible not to conclude that aspects have a dependent nature *(paratantra svabhāva; gzhan gyi dbang yin pa).* Cittamātrins might still argue (v.59) that since consciousness is reflexively aware, cognition can still take place in the absence of aspects. This is refuted on the grounds that cognition that is purely subjective in nature has never been experienced and therefore does not exist.[143] Also, even if the mind is like a crystal sphere, in cognition it nevertheless actively observes and experiences, and these two are contradictory. Mi pham comments on this verse as follows.

> *The term 'cognition' is generally applied to an awareness of the different aspects of the various objects. Let us consider the eye consciousness, for example. Without an observation of any of the aspects of form one will not be able to identify exactly what eye-consciousness is. Likewise, a solitary cognition without any aspects cannot be experienced. That which is called 'mere clear awareness, like a pure crystal sphere' is an apprehension of the aspects observed when consciousness itself is taken as the object. When it is said that one thing,* x, *is similar to another,* y, *it must be that* x *appears with the aspects of* y. *If no aspects have appeared then to*

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[143]See MALV (P.64b2) "If there is not an aspect existing in or outside [of the mind], knowledge would necessarily cognize only itself." nang dang phyi rol tu gyur pa'i rnam pa med na stobs kyis 'di 'ba' zhig dmigs par 'gyur ro/ That is to say, all cognition would be only self-awareness.

> *classify [things as] 'this' and 'that' will be hollow, like saying that the barren woman's son is fair.*[144]

Mi pham argues that conventionally speaking, the term 'cognition' always implies an awareness of the different aspects of an object, understood as corresponding (in one way or another) to the various characteristics of that object. Objects cannot be known in isolation from their characteristics—for example, one cannot ascertain an object 'grass' if one does not also apprehend the aspects 'green', 'damp' and so forth. This, of course, follows Buddhist ontology insofar as it is held that no object such as 'grass', 'pot', 'chariot' and so forth exists apart from its characteristics.[145] It is also consistent with the Buddhist theory of *apoha* according to which objects are conceptually identified, named and classified by excluding all those characteristics that are not the characteristics of the given object.[146] I can assert this is a pot because I have mentally excluded all the characteristics pertaining to non-pot from those I am currently apprehending. Similarly, if there are no objects apart from sets of characteristics, there can be no cognition apart from an awareness of aspects. Even when we say that the mind is 'mere clear awareness' what we are referring to is how the mind apprehends itself. When the mind apprehends itself reflexively, it 'sees' itself with the aspects 'clear' and 'aware'. Such a statement therefore corresponds to what the

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[144]C.p294. de la spyir yul gang dang gang so sor rnam par rig pa la rnam shes zhes gdags pa ste/ de'ang mig shes lta bu la'ang gzugs kyi rnams pa mtha' dag ma dmigs na mig shes go rang 'di'o zhes gzung bar mi nus pa de bzhin rnam pa med pa'i shes pa rkyang pa nyams su myong ba med de/ de la gsal rig tsam shel sgong 'dra ba zhes zer ba'ang shes pa nyid yul du byas pa'i rnam pa la dmigs pa yin no/ des na 'di dang 'di 'dra'o zhes gang dmigs na de dang de'i rnam par 'char dgos kyi/ rnam pa ma shar bar de dang der bzhag pa ni dam bca' tsham ste/ mo gsham gyi bu mdog dkar po yin no zer ba dang 'dra'o//

[145]This point is argued by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla at TS and TSP 562, 587. TSP 587 reads: tasya ca nīlādirūpasyaikānekasvabhāvaśūnyatvena bhrāntijñānapratibhāsātmakatvāt/ nāpi parmāṇavaḥ siddhāḥ teṣāṃ paurvāparyāvasthāyitayā digbhāgabhedinām ekatvāsiddeḥ/ taṃ prati kathaṃ nīlādirūpatayā paramāṇūnāṃ pratyakṣatvaṃ paurvāparyasya bānupalakṣaṇam bhrāntinimittenārthāntarasamāropād iti śakyaṃ vaktum//

Mi pham's own definition of perception is similar. In the mK*has jug* (1.28) he writes: "perceptions consist of the grasping of distinguishing features". 'du shes ni mtshan mar 'dzin pa ste/

It is also interesting to note that Śāntarakṣita's unique contribution to Buddhist logic was the application of the *apoha* theory to aspects (*rnam pa*) themselves. He calls mental representations eliminations (*apoha; sel ba*) because they are distinct from other appearances, and because they are the cause of our obtaining things that are excluded from other appearances. (TS 1007 abc) If this is the case, then aspects are not reals but play a part in the conceptual construction of the known. See the discussion in Dreyfus (1997:233-243).

[146]See TS and TSP 587.

'subject' mind says of the same mind taken as 'object', but strictly within a meditative state where subject and object are not two distinct things but simply terms that facilitate us talking about the reflexivity of the mind.

Finally, Śāntarakṣita (v.60) refutes the Nirākāra argument that aspects are non-existent because they arise from delusion.[147] If they arise from delusion they must have a dependent nature; they will have to be related to the latent tendencies from which they arise, and must therefore not only have a compatible nature to them, but be existent. Even if one accepts that there are no external objects that give rise to the aspects that appear in consciousness, there is no cognition unless the aspects themselves are acknowledged to exist.

Mi pham stresses how important Śāntarakṣita's refutation of the Nirākāravāda is for his project of synthesizing Yogācāra and Madhyamaka.

> *This reasoning that refutes the Nirākāravādins is extremely powerful. It possesses extraordinarily profound key points, and if one is capable of fully realizing these one will [be able to] reach a conclusion regarding the Cittamātra view. Since these[points] also reveal the secret points of Madhyamaka, nothing is more significant than this in the [present] synthesis [of Yogācāra and Madhyamaka).*[148]

The key points in question here are points that are found in the commentaries[149] showing how interdependence (*pratītyasamutpāda*) offers a convincing and coherent account of the cognition process without rendering causation meaningless. On the contrary, the arguments put forward show that any philosophical scenario other than that of Madhyamaka renders causation—and specifically the cognitive process—logically impossible. Most of these arguments have already been considered in different parts of this study: temporal

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[147]This is one of the chief arguments put forward by Ratnākaraśānti in defence of the Nirākāravāda. See PPU 161, a5-161, b4. Reproduced in Kajiyama (1965:421-420).

[148]C. p.302-3. rnam brdzun pa 'gog pa'i rigs pa 'di rnams shin tu stobs dang ldan cing/ thun mong min pa'i zab gnad yod pa legs par myong nus na sems tsam gyi grub mtha'i phu thag chod cing dbu ma'i gnad gsang ston par byed pa yin pas tshul gnyis kyi lugs la 'di las don che ba med do//

[149]In Mi pham's commentary on verse 60, which is based on Kamalaśīla's *pañjikā*.

difficulties in the relation between cause and effect, which can be neither consecutive nor simultaneous; the impossibility of truly existing aspects or cognitions either to cease to exist, or to arise when they were previously non-existent (this point is important when considering how cognition works in a purified mind that is no longer deluded); the contradiction of false aspects producing true cognition; and following all the previous points, the impossibility of accounting for how aspects (held to be false or non-existent) are connected with valid cognition. We can summarise by saying that these refutations cluster around a central theme: the difficulties involved in accounting for a relationship between one entity that is ultimately non-existent and another that is ultimately existent.

VIII.5 Appraising Śāntarakṣita's epistemology and philosophy of mind

VIII.5.1 Doxographical issues

The arguments that Śāntarakṣita applies to the nature of mind and the process of cognition are similar if not the same as the arguments he uses in the opening verses of the MAL against various philosophies of true existence. The analysis of these arguments previously carried out in Chapters V, VI and VII—covering the assumptions behind them and the logical laws on which they are based—is equally relevant here. Similarly, Śāntarakṣita's understanding of what the 'neither one nor many' argument refutes and how, need not be repeated here. What is interesting is that the mind and cognition are simply treated as particular instances to which these general arguments apply. Mind is not accorded the special status attributed to it by the Cittamātra school.

In order to assess Śāntarakṣita's final position, the progression identified by Śākya mchog ldan[150] appears to offer the most helpful account. He asserts that Śāntarakṣita passes through Sautrāntika and then Yogācāra before reaching the view of Madhyamaka.

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[150]See section VII.3 above. See also Dreyfus (1997:83ff).

This certainly seems to be exemplified by his treatment of cognition. As we have seen, Śāntarakṣita suggests in verse 43 that if one accepts the existence of external objects, then the Sautrāntika view is the best since he has established that cognition occurs by means of aspects appearing to consciousness. In addition, he implies a preference for the Equalist subschool of Sautrāntika. So this is a first conclusion of his analysis. If one then goes further and refutes the existence of external objects, positing a theory where cognition is entirely mental in nature, then in verses 44-45 Śāntarakṣita expresses his preference for the view of the Sākāravādin subschool of Cittamātra in relative truth. Finally, he concludes in verse 92 that the Madhyamaka view of the non-true existence of consciousness is the correct view in ultimate truth.

The difficulty is that the soteriological structure of the MAL is not just a question of form, it is actually the method Śāntarakṣita uses to approach his subject. He has followed what Georges Dreyfus, in connection with Dharmakīrti, has called a "strategy of ascending scales of analysis".[151] Like Dharmakīrti, he starts out explaining things on an externalist model, eventually critiques that position and then shifts to an internalist perspective. Dharmakīrti's final position accords with Cittamātra, whereas Śāntarakṣita critiques this as well and shifts to Madhyamaka for his final view. In assessing claims about Śāntarakṣita's own viewpoint, it is therefore necessary to bear in mind that some claims might apply to one level but fail on another.

His position on the Sākāravāda/Nirākāravāda debate is a case in point. It has been shown that any attempt at classifying Śāntarakṣita as a Sākāravādin or as a Nirākāravādin is unsatisfactory—but this is true only if we attempt to define his final position. Although it can be said that he accepts Sākāravāda relatively, his standpoint in fact entails a radical

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[151]Dreyfus (1997:49, 86ff).

re-interpretation of Sākāravāda in terms of dependent origination, such that his presentation of it no longer accords with the Cittamātra presentation. The ontological basis of the epistemological model proposed by Cittamātrin Sākāravādins is radically re-defined, as is its corresponding account of causality. This means that on the level of meditation experience, what is realized respectively by Cittamātrin and Mādhyamika Sākāravādins is quite different. And although Śāntarakṣita implies that Nirākāravāda is soteriologically superior to Sākāravāda he also maintains that it is inferior in terms of logical coherence. So in some sense he follows neither. And if one fails to appreciate the subtlety of his position, it is misleading to apply these doxographical terms to him.

Ichigō (1985:LXXIX-LXXX) comes to a similar conclusion and argues that "we can call Śāntarakṣita a Sākāravādin only in the sense that he holds that knowledge is endowed with an image *[i.e. aspect—my addition]* which is not real. However, it would be more prudent to classify him only as a member of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school." Ichigō asserts that he can be called a Sākāravādin insofar as he accepts that self-cognition is always endowed with an aspect. But Śāntarakṣita refutes the reality of aspects when he applies to them the criticism usually applied to partless particles (vv.46-49). And his position is more akin to that of the Nirākāravādins when he speaks of reflexive awareness as illumination (*prakāśa*) in MALV 16.

There is another outstanding issue in relation to Śāntarakṣita's epistemology and philosophy of mind which is similarly affected by this strategy of ascending scales of analysis; and this concerns how he can legitimately be termed a Svātantrika. The problem is that dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgika definitions of what is taken to be the epistemological 'given' in Svātantrika do not fully match Śāntarakṣita's own presentation. Sara McClintock has cogently argued that dGe lugs pa claims may be judged successful on the externalist level

of analysis, but not on the internalist level.[152]

The term 'given' refers in contemporary epistemology to "the immediate apprehension of the contents of sense experience",[153] in other words to that which presents itself immediately and in some sense unassailably to awareness. The given can be subdivided into what we will call the perceptual given, that is, non-conceptual sense data, and the phenomenal given by which we mean seeming-objects of awareness, whether perceptual or hallucinatory.[154] The perceptual given functions on the external model of cognition while the phenomenal given is addressed by internalist models. Now, as we have already noted, dGe lugs pa definitions of Svātantrika highlight two key points with regard to the given: 1) that Svātantrikas accept a commonly appearing *(mthun snang ba)* subject *(chos can)* of debate; and 2) that this subject appears to non-erroneous cognition *(pramāṇa)* meaning a non-defective sense consciousness *(dbang shes gnod med)*. For example, lCang skya's definition is as follows:

> *Thus, the meaning of* svatantra *is as follows: there is a subject that appears in common to the non-mistaken cognition of the proponent and the opponent by virtue of that thing's mode of existing in terms of [being] a basis of designation, and not only on account of what has been accepted by the opponent... Further, in the Svātantrika system, in conventional terms non-defective sense consciousnesses are non-mistaken with regard to the objects that appear [to them]. And the reason that [the non-defective sense consciousness] is non-mistaken in this way comes down to the fact that [Svātantrikas] accept that forms and so on appear to non-defective [sense] consciousnesses to be established by way of their own nature, and they assert that forms and so forth* are *[actually] established in their own nature.*[155]

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[152]"The Role of the 'Given' and its Implications for the Tibetan (dGe lugs pa) Classification of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla as Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamakas", oral presentation by Sara McClintock, IABS Conference, Lausanne, August 1999. An updated version of this talk will shortly be published in *The Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika Distinction*, eds. George Dreyfus and Sara McClintock, Wisdom Publications, Boston, due October 2002.

[153]Entry under 'given' by Alan H. Goldman in *A Companion to Epistemology* eds. Dancy and Sosa (1992: 159-162).

[154]Here I follow McClintock's terminology. It is used to simplify the presentation, on the understanding that both givens are phenomena and both can and do occur in perception.

[155]lCang skya grub mtha' (Collected Works, nga, 28a): des na phyi rgol gyi khas blangs tsam la ma 'khris par gdags gzhi'i ngos nas don gyi sdod lugs kyi dbang gis rgol phyi rgol gyi tshad ma ma 'khrul ba la chos can mthun snang du grub cing/ (...) de yang rang rgyud pa'i lugs la dbang shes g.nod med rnams tha snyad du snang yul la ma 'khrul ba yin la/ de ltar ma 'khrul pa'i rgyu mtshan yang g.nod med kyi shes pa rnams la

The critical linkage made by dGe lugs pa scholars starting with Tsong kha pa, is that the Svātantrika commitment to a commonly appearing subject entails an ontological commitment to the existence of things being established by way of their own natures (*rang bzhin gyis grub pa*).[156] This is possible in light of the second tenet which holds that the sense perception even of ordinary beings is non-mistaken (*abhrānta*).[157] That is why it follows that since things appear to be established in their own nature, they must actually be so. In Western terminology, on the dGe lugs pa reading of the Svātantrikas, there is an unassailable given. This given is what is termed variously 'established by way of its own nature' (*rang bzhin gyis grub pa*), 'established by virtue of its own character' (*rang gyi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*), 'established from its own side' (*rang ngos nas grub pa*) and 'established by way of its own entity' (*rang gi ngo bos grub pa*). It is the Svātantrika commitment to such a given that enables them to postulate subjects that appear commonly to both parties in a debate.[158] Not only do the subjects (*dharmin; chos can*) appear commonly, so do their characteristics, and these can be used as evidence (*rtags*) in proof statements concerning the subject. dGe lug pas call such evidence "autonomous evidence" (*rang rgyud kyi rtags*). On the dGe lugs pa view, Prāsaṅgikas reject any commonly appearing subject, and accept evidence only insofar as it is accepted by the opponent (*gzhan grags kyi gtan tshigs*).

In assessing the dGe lugs pa claims in connection with Śāntarakṣita, there is an obvious problem, namely that the subject of debate (*dharmin; chos can*) is necessarily conceptual and yet is said to appear to a non-conceptual perceptual awareness. The difficulty might

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gzugs sogs rang gi ngo bos grub par snang zhing gzugs sogs kyang rang gi ngo bos grub par zhal gyis bzhes pa nyid la thug go// See also the translation in Lopez (1987:294-5).

[156]For Tsong kha pa's position see *dGongs pa rab gsal* 101b3f: de lta gzugs sgra sogs lnga rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub par dbang shes la snang ba ni/ ma rig pas bslad pa yin pas shes pa de dang/ gzugs brnyan dang brag cha sogs snang ba'i dbang shes rnams la/ phra rags tsam ma gtogs pa snang yul la 'khrul ma 'khrul la khyad par med cing/ Cited in McClintock (1999).

[157]Śāntarakṣita defines sense perception as non-mistaken in TS 1214.

[158]See Tillemans (1982:109 and n.22).

not be insurmountable within an externalist Sautrāntika analysis, where the aspects that appear to perception have a structurally isomorphic congruence with the ultimately real particulars that cause them. So although the *dharmin* itself is a conceptual fiction, it is based on the non-erroneous perceptual given and has an indirect correspondence to the real natures (*svabhāva*) that are the causes of the aspects in perception. In this sense, it is fair to say that Sautrāntikas do accept that things are in some sense conventionally "established by way of their own natures".

However, if we turn to the internalist analysis the structural isomorphism of the aspect in perception no longer applies. The fundamental cause of the aspect is not an external particular but the ripening of latencies (*vāsanā*) that have existed in the mind since beginningless time. But even though the primary cause for perception is the mind itself, the aspects or images that arise appear to exist externally (they correspond to what we have termed the phenomenal given). The point here is that despite being non-conceptual, the dualistic appearance of these aspects contradicts the principle that perceptual awareness is non-erroneous, since the object of the awareness does not exist in the way that it appears. Thus Kamalaśīla asserts that according to internalist analysis, the aspects in perception are not free from error in the same way as they are on the externalist level.

> *The term 'non-erroneous' should be understood as 'trustworthy'* (avidsaṃvāda)*, and not as 'having for its basis a form as it really exists'. If this latter were meant here, then, since on the Yogācāra view there can be no real basis, the definition would not be applicable to sense perception as accepted by both schools [i.e. Sautrāntika and Yogācāra]. As for being trustworthy, what this means is 'the presence of the capacity to envisage a thing which is capable of the intended effective action'—not actually envisaging it, as obstacles are likely to appear in the actual envisaging.*[159]

Kamalaśīla maintains that on the internalist model of cognition, sense perception is non-

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[159]TSP 1312. abhrāntamatrāvisaṃvāditvena draṣṭavyam na tu yathāvasthitālambanākāratayā/ anyathā hi yogācāramatenālambanāsiddher ubhayanayasamāśrayaeṇeṣṭasya pratyakṣalakṣaṇasyāvyāpitā syāt/ avisaṣvāditvam cābhimatārthakriyāsamarthārthaprāpaṇaśaktikatvam na tu prāpaṇam eva pratibandhādisambhavāt/ Transl. McClintock.

mistaken only in the sense that it can lead one to an object capable of effective action. Although the phenomenal given is non-conceptual, it is not congruent with its causes. This position poses a serious challenge to our considering Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla as Svātantrikas according to lCang skya's definition of that term. In fact, on account of this problem the dGe lugs pa doxographical definition of Svātantrika is more appropriate in the case of Sautrāntika-Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas such as Bhāvaviveka, and that it is unhelpful for characterizing Śāntarakṣita.

If it is difficult to apply the Svātantrika tenet of non-erroneous sense perception to Śāntarakṣita, what of the other tenet, namely the existence of the commonly appearing subject? Even if what appears to perception is erroneous, there is still something that appears. And in verse 78 of the MAL Śāntarakṣita says, "I do not refute entities insofar as they are of the nature of appearance" (*bdag ni snang ba'i ngang can gyi// dngos po dgag par mi byed de//*).[160] If there is something—anything—that Śāntarakṣita does not deny, does it fall into the category of things that are established from their own side, at least relatively? The question here is whether, by accepting "that which is of the nature of appearance", Śāntarakṣita is thereby making an ontological commitment to inherent existence. This question is especially critical when we recall his preference for Sākāravāda in conventional truth, illustrating his preference for a theory where aspects (*rnam pa*) have some kind of existence over a theory where they don't.

We found earlier in Chapter VI that the logical subject (*dharmin*) of verse 2 of the MAL

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[160]This statement is used to answer the charge of *āśrayāsiddha*, or subject failure, in his argument on the non-true existence of things. Subject failure would occur if the Buddhist proponent considered that those entities held to be truly existent by his opponent were in fact non-existent. In this case, the Buddhist argument would lack an existent subject (*dharmin*) and would be no different from pronouncements about the proverbial barren woman's son. However, by accepting "the entity that appears" Śāntarakṣita safeguards the logical correctness of his reasoning even though his conceptual understanding of the *dharmin* is quite different from that of his opponent.

was not accepted by both sides. McClintock (op.cit.) also finds that there are clear cases where both Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla use evidence that is accepted only by the opponent.

> *To take one example, consider the arguments against the notion of a gross object set forth in the* Dravyapadārthaparīkṣā *of the TS and TSP.*[161] *Here, the opponent maintains that if gross objects did not exist, there could be no perception of such entities as trees and so forth, since the atoms that make up these entities are not perceptible. Śāntarakṣita responds by noting that the atoms are perceptible, but only when they come together in such a way as they mutually support one another in becoming perceptible. He emphasizes here that one only has a determination of those aspects of the partless and utterly unique particular for which the causes for determination exist. Kamalaśīla explains that one does not have a determination of all aspects of those particulars, because one is not trained to see those aspects, or one's mind is not sufficiently sharp, and so on. Based on this argumentation, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla conclude that there is no gross entity apart from the individual atoms, because that which is known in direct perception can be shown to be the partless, momentary and unique particular.*
>
> *However, as we know, neither author ultimately accepts the existence of such particulars external to the mind. Does this mean that in presenting their arguments concerning these particles and our perception of them that they have done away with the metalogical requirement of* ubhayasiddha *[i.e. that a subject should be recognized by both parties]? It seems that they have.*

Śāntarakṣita's method of arguing philosophical views according to ascending scales of analysis means, for example, that in the MAL he provisionally adopts the Sautrāntika perspective to refute the Vaibhāṣikas, the Cittamātra perspective to refute the Sautrāntikas, and only in his final position does he adopt what can be taken to be his own view, the Madhyamaka perspective, to refute the Cittamātrins. In all these argumentations save the final one, it is fair to say that the various *dharmin* he refers to are only accepted by the opponent. Śāntarakṣita accepts them only pragmatically for the purposes of debate, for without this no debate is possible at all. This evidence does not accord with the dGe lugs pa criteria defining Svātantrika.

Finally, there remains the question of whether the acceptance of aspects in relative truth

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[161]See TS and TSP 561, 586-7.

entails the kind of ontological commitment ascribed to Svātantrikas by dGe lugs pa scholars. In an internalist framework, the commonly appearing subject is the result not only of conceptual error (the error that applies in externalist models) but also of ignorance in the form of *vāsanā*-s. So the object of perception cannot be said to exist as it appears even conventionally. And since the phenomenal given is the result of error and ignorance, its acceptance by both parties in a debate does not entail a subtle commitment to "existence from its own side". Insofar as Śāntarakṣita does not deny aspects in cognition, we can agree with dGe lugs pas that he accepts the given. But that given is in no way unassailable or non-erroneous.

VIII.5.2 The nature of the mind

All the different epistemological positions considered in the MAL from verse 16 to 60 represent theories that apply to the nature of cognition in deluded beings. But to ascertain the essential nature of the mind on Śāntarakṣita's view, one also needs to look at how he accounts for the workings of the mind once it is liberated from delusions and defilements. To begin with, Śāntarakṣita's definition of the mind in verse 16 is generic, that is, mind—whether deluded or enlightened—is reflexive awareness. Furthermore, this essentially reflexive nature is intrinsically free of the dualistic type of cognition associated with ignorance, and characterized by the grasping and the grasped. In TS 2078 we read:

> *Therefore, that which is disputed [i.e.* svasaṃvedana*] is considered to be non-dual since it is devoid of object and subject because it is of the nature of knowledge, like a reflection.*[162]

And in TS 2081:

> *The nature of consciousness is its capacity to illuminate, and that can have no place in the apprehended object. Since [cognition endowed] with no aspect and so on is not reasonable, the pervasion [of consciousness by non-duality] is established.*[163]

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[162]vivādāspada mārūḍhaṃ vijñānatvād ato mataḥ/ advayaṃ ve dyakartṛtvaviyogāt pratibimbavat/
[163]vijñānatvaṃ prakāśatvaṃ tac ca grāhye nirāspadaṃ anirbhāsādyayogena vyāptis tenāsya niścitā/

The aspects that appear in cognition are of the nature of consciousness, and there is therefore no dichotomy between the nature of the aspect and that of consciousness itself. In fact, the aspect *is* cognition. Cognition is nothing other than the reflexive awareness of aspects and reflexive awareness is nothing other than the capacity to illuminate. Crucially, this applies not only to deluded beings but also to buddhas. Śāntarakṣita asserts in TS 2046:

> *Whether endowed with an aspect or not, cognition does not apprehend anything other [than consciousness]. Therefore, with regard to a buddha's cognition, the question does not arise.*[164]

The difference between the cognition of ordinary people and that of a buddha lies in whether it is false (*alīka*) or true (*satya*), and whether it is erroneous (*bhrānti*) or not.[165] Error in this case includes such tendencies as taking the aspect for an objective entity. This implies that there is no necessary connection between aspects and ignorance. Ichigō puts it this way:

> *According to Śāntarakṣita's position, it may be said that knowledge results from error or nescience, but not that the image arises from it. Accordingly, because of self-cognition, knowledge is intrinsically endowed with an image. Therefore even the Buddha's knowledge cognizes images and it does not have a singular nature. (...) The difference between the knowledge of ordinary people and that of the Buddha has nothing to do with the existence or non-existence of an image.*

We have seen that in verse 60 of the MAL Śāntarakṣita questions the logic of saying that aspects arise from delusion. Aspects merely arise from the luminous clarity intrinsic to the mind, which makes the process possible for anyone endowed with a mind, whether ordinary beings or buddhas. Mi pham concurs:

> *All the aspects of objects of cognition that are experienced have therefore, without exception, essentially arisen as clear and aware experience. (...) The valid cognition of inference is based on direct perception, and the direct perception of objects in the end reaches completion through the clear experience of self-awareness. If one asserts any principles for the validity of cognition in [beings of] limited understanding this will be impossible without [positing] self-awareness.*[166]

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[164]sākāraṃ tan nirākāraṃ yuktaṃ nānyasya vedakaṃ/ iti bauddhe 'pi vijñāne na tu cintā pravarttate/

[165]See Ichigō (1985:LXXII ff.).

[166]C.p208 des na gang shes bya'i rnam pa nyam su myong ngo cog tham cad myong ba gsal rig gi ngo bor

Far from being an expression of delusion, the nature of aspects is such that they safeguard the theoretical possibility that the cognition even of deluded beings can occasionally be valid. The difference between ordinary beings and buddhas lies not in the fact that the cognition of the former is always false and that of the latter is always true, but rather in how they respectively understand the nature of the aspects they cognize, which is tantamount to saying that it depends on how they understand the nature of their own minds.

Further analysis of Śāntarakṣita's view of the result of the path, the nature of the soteriological goal, is beyond the purview of this study. The MAL does not enter into this topic in more detail, but evidence for his view can be found in the final chapter of the TS.[167]

It is significant that the unique *pramāṇa* system that Mi pham developed can be viewed as based on exactly the sort of analysis that Śāntarakṣita carries out here.[168] With respect to conventional *pramāṇa*, in the case of untutored ordinary persons Mi pham envisages conventional valid cognition of limited impure perception (*ma dag tshur mthong tha snyad dyod pa'i tshad ma*). In the case of ordinary persons practising the path, he asserts, in addition, conventional valid cognition of pure sublime vision or understanding (*dag pa'i / phags pa'i gzigs snang tha snyad dpyod pa'i tshad ma*). As for enlightened beings, he admits both these types of valid cognition, on the understanding that a buddha is not 'subject' to the cognition pertaining to limited impure perception, but nevertheless is aware of how ordinary beings perceive the world.

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skyes pas/ (...) de'ang rjes dpag tshad ma'i mtha' mngon sum la thug cing/ mngon sum don rig kyang mthar gsal bar nyams su myong ba'i rang rig gis tshar phyin pa yin pas tshur mthong tshad ma'i rnam gzhad zhig 'dod na rang rig med du mi rung ba yin pas/

[167]This topic is the subject of a thesis recently submitted by Sara McClintock to Harvard University but unavailable to the present author.

[168]See 'Table I: Mi pham's System of Four Pramāṇas' in Pettit (1999:431).

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PART THREE

THE TWO TRUTHS

CHAPTER NINE ŚĀNTARAKṢITA'S APPROACH TO THE TWO TRUTHS

IX.1 The problems raised

The final topic addressed by this study is the particular way that Śāntarakṣita approaches the Two Truths. The Two Truths (*satyadvaya; bden pa gnyis*), that is, what we term ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya; don dam bden pa*) and relative truth[1] (*saṃvṛtisatya; kun rdzob bden pa*), are universally regarded as the main doctrinal framework in the presentation of Mahāyāna teachings of the Second Turning.[2] In terms of structure of presentation, they are to Madhyamaka what the Four Noble Truths are to the schools of Nikāya Buddhism and the Three Natures are to the Cittamātra school.[3] We noted in Chapter III.2 that Mi pham believes the MAL's approach to the Two Truths is not only characteristic of the Yogācāra Svātantrika-Madhyamaka school, but is also one of the main strengths and interests of the text and, accordingly, of Śāntarakṣita's philosophy. In view of the number of issues in the MAL that have been shown to be contentious, it may not be surprising that the Two Truths are no exception. Within the Tibetan Buddhist world, Śāntarakṣita's approach has given rise to widely differing appraisals. At one end of the spectrum we have the critique of the 14th century scholar mKhas grub dge legs dpal bzang, a student of Tsong kha pa, in his *sTong thun chen mo* regarding Śāntarakṣita's understanding of the ultimate; while at the other end we have Mi pham's admiration for an approach that he personally endorsed. mKhas grub's remarks illustrate the sorts of issues raised.[4]

> *Another former Tibetan master claims that there are two kinds of Mādhyamikas who are given [different] names depending upon how they accept the ultimate. (One is called) an utterly non-abiding Mādhyamika, [the other] a Mādhyamika who establishes the logic of illusion. The first [category] is said to be comprised of Candrakīrti and so forth who believe that the non-affirming negation* (med

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[1]See Chapter V n.5, for a discussion of the translation of the terms *saṃvṛtisatya* and *kun rdzob bden pa*.
[2]There are many studies in the research literature on the Two Truths. For detailed analysis see for example: Lindtner (1981); Sprung (1973); Newland (1992 and 1999); Cabezón (1992); Murti (1960:228-255).
[3]See 'Documents d'Abhidharma: les deux, les quatre, les trois vérités' by Louis de la Vallée Poussin, MCB pp.159-187, 1937.
[4]TTC, *Collected Works*, vol. ka [82]. Translation by Cabezón (1992:89).

dgag), *which is the refutation of there being any truth to appearances, is the ultimate truth. The second [category] is said to consist of Śāntarakṣita, Ārya [Vimuktasena] and Haribhadra who, [it is claimed] believe that the illusorylike conjunction* (tshogs) *of appearance* (snang) *and emptiness* (stong) *is the ultimate truth.(...)*

Because the illusory-like conjunction of appearance and emptiness in fact is a conventional truth, there is no single Great Mādhyamika who accepts it as the ultimate truth. Were it an ultimate truth, it would follow, absurdly, that everything that exists (gzhi grub) *would be an ultimate truth, for it is impossible that a phenomenon not be empty of truth. It seems that those who posit this believe that the direct object* (dngos kyi gzhal bya) *of an inferential cognition [of emptiness]* (rigs shes rjes dpag) *is itself the ultimate truth. The direct object of an inferential cognition, that is, the illusorylike conjunction of the subject [of the syllogism]* (chos can) *such as a sprout, and the predicate* (bsgrub bya'i chos), *truthlessness* (bden med), *is concordant* (mthun pa) *with the ultimate in so far as they [the ultimate and this conjunction] are both negations of [the same] object of refutation, namely true existence. For this reason, both the* Madhyamakālaṃkāra *and the* Madhyamakāloka *explain that it is [merely] labeled ultimate [without actually being so], and so not even Śāntarakṣita and his followers accept that such [an entity] is the ultimate truth.*

According to mKhas grub, Candrakīrti, and thereafter the Prāsaṅgika school, accept that emptiness (*stong pa nyid*) is a non-affirming negative (*med dgag*). By this we mean that when we say 'the cup is empty [of *svabhāva*]' we are negating its inherent or independent existence but are not thereby positing anything else in its place. An example of an affirming negative would be when we say 'grass is not blue' we are thereby implying that it is another colour instead. By using non-affirming negatives, then, Prāsaṅgikas refute the true existence of what appears to cognition and thereby establish the ultimate truth. The ultimate truth is emptiness (*śūnyatā; stong pa nyid*), and emptiness is a non-affirming negative regarding true existence. However, mKhas grub claims that Śāntarakṣita and his followers have a different understanding of the ultimate, and hence of what emptiness is. For his school, the ultimate is "the illusorylike conjunction of appearance and emptiness", but mKhas grub argues that such a conjunction must necessarily be a relative truth not an ultimate one. Cabezón (1992:440, n.274) explains the argument as follows. Because every phenomenon is empty, it can be said to be the illusorylike composite of appearance and emptiness. But because the appearance part is a relative truth, it makes the conjunction of

appearance and emptiness a relative truth, even though the other half (the emptiness) is an ultimate truth. One can infer from this that for Śāntarakṣita and his school, the ultimate truth itself is the direct object of an inferential cognition of emptiness, while the concordant (*mthun pa*) ultimate is the illusorylike conjunction of appearance and emptiness which is in accord with the ultimate insofar as both the ultimate and this conjunction are negations of the true existence of a given object. So for mKhas grub, even eminent scholars like Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla have fallen victim to internal contradiction in their system. While on the one hand they call the ultimate "the conjunction of appearance and emptiness", elsewhere they acknowledge that this is only the concordant ultimate, not the true ultimate. The so-called concordant ultimate should therefore not really be called an ultimate truth at all.

Asserting that Śāntarakṣita's system fails to present ultimate truth correctly is tantamount to saying that he should not strictly be called a Mādhyamika at all. One wonders why mKhas grub does not pursue his argument as far as this. But once again, just as we saw on a number of occasions in Chapter VIII in relation to other scholars, this study will show that much of the disagreement between mKhas grub and Śāntarakṣita is related to differences in definitions and terminological usage.

The issues raised by this passage lead us to the heart of the matter: in order to appraise Śāntarakṣita's understanding of the Two Truths, we need to know: a) what he means by emptiness; b) what he means by ultimate and concordant ultimate; c) what he understands by relative truth; d) how he interprets the relation between the Two Truths. All these questions are genuine issues within Mahāyāna Buddhism itself. And even on the limited evidence we have seen so far, it is obvious that our answers to these questions will depend very much on the understanding that we ourselves bring to the text. If we read the MAL

through the lens of a commentary such as Mi pham's, we get a very specific reading of it the philosophical assumptions of which should be transparent. This is why, before proceeding with an examination of the MAL itself, we need to clarify further the understanding Mi pham is bringing to his own reading of the text. This Chapter does not ask questions about whether the dGe lugs pa and rNying ma pa interpretations are right or wrong; it is concerned simply with appraising Mi pham's view as a philosophical elucidation of the text.

But in addition, as Western critics of Śāntarakṣita's system, we also need to ask questions from outside of Buddhism. For example, how coherent really is the Two Truth framework? So much of Śāntarakṣita's argumentation rests on this underlying principle that a final appraisal of his philosophy would be impossible without analysing it at least provisionally to see what implications follow from it. The Two Truths are not questioned by Mahāyāna scholars within the tradition, and yet the principle is a complex one, and one that has no equivalent in Western philosophy. It links issues about levels of truth, about limits of thought, and about the possibility of metaphysics, and treats them together in a single framework.[5] Chisholm comes close to a type of 'two truths' framework insofar as he distinguishes types of truth.[6] He argues that what an entity is "in the strict and philosophical" sense is not identical to how it is understood in the "loose and popular" sense, and yet the two are not contradictory. Depending on which of these two senses is operating, an assertion such as "Mr Smith is not the person he used to be" has quite distinct meanings. As a mereological essentialist, he claims that it is impossible for a

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[5]See Sprung (1973:2).

[6]See *Person and Object* by Roderick M. Chisholm, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1976, p.108ff. Of related interest is the evaluation of his position in Loux (1998:226ff.). Chisholm's assertion is that truth conditions and criteria depend on circumstance. The Buddhist principle of Two Truths is broader than this since it takes into account primarily the circumstance of the *subject*, that is, not only the truth criteria which the subject chooses to apply to the situation (e.g. commonsense or scientific) but also the subject's state of mind taken in a soteriological sense.

thing to remain the same through a change in its parts, and yet by virtue of this difference in types of truth, he maintains that this does not contradict the belief that, for example, the table I am now writing on is the same as the one I was writing on ten minutes ago. One might add to these two types of truth one or more scientific types of truth, so that it is not contradictory to say that (a) the table I am writing on is a combination of atoms and molecules and (b) the table I am writing on is made of wood and metal. However, the Two Truths in Buddhism concern more than types of truth, largely because the highest ultimate truth effectively sets the standard from which all other levels of truth are evaluated. And in Buddhism, such a criterion is only possible because the soteriological process of mental transformation is possible; without this, ultimate knowledge of the nature of things —that is, of things just as they are—would be beyond human reach.

We should therefore be aware that of all the topics examined so far, the Two Truths are the most difficult from a hermeneutical point of view. They do not fit neatly into the pigeonholes of metaphysics, epistemology, soteriology, theology or the study of mysticism. In fact they bring all these domains together in a way that is foreign to the Western tradition of thinking, and hence difficult to grasp.[7] Since it is said that complete understanding of the Two Truths is only gained through the perfect stabilisation of meditational equipoise, the analysis I make here can only be a modest and inadequate contribution to the subject.

Although the principle of the Two Truths is philosophically radical from a Western viewpoint, on analysis we find that as a philosophical claim it is problematic. And so fundamental is it to Mahāyāna Buddhism that any criticism of it will necessarily entail serious

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[7]Rupert Gethin (2001:1-6) has a useful discussion of this issue. He is faced with similar problems in examining the Abhidharma account of how one progresses from ordinary experience to transcendental experience.

criticism of Śāntarakṣita's entire system. In the process of assessing the principle, we propose to show that Mi pham's unique re-evaluation of the doctrine, which was inspired by the MAL, is perhaps the only way of ensuring that the Two Truths are philosophically tenable.

IX.1.2 The criteria for distinguishing the Two Truths

One of the most significant divergences in interpretation between dGe lugs pa and rNying ma pa schools of Buddhism is that which concerns the basis upon which each school distinguishes between ultimate and relative truth.[8] For dGe lugs pas, the distinction is made on the basis of the object of knowledge (*shes bya; jñeya*).[9] Appearances are the object of knowledge in relative truth, while emptiness is the object of knowledge in ultimate truth. So the two truths are two types of things that we can know, and that we should aspire to know; they are both truths that are knowable and accessible to human understanding. They are not two types of viewpoint or perspective on the world, nor are they different levels of reality. Paradoxically, neither are they two different types of truth! They are existents which is equivalent to saying they are objects of knowledge (*shes bya*).

On the basis of this definition, mKhas grub's argument above is quite clear. To talk of the "conjunction of appearance and emptiness" is to blur what are two fundamental doctrinal categories. Since appearance is relative and emptiness is ultimate, any conjunction of the two is highly questionable in principle; but were there such a thing, it could not rightly be called ultimate (as Śāntarakṣita is claimed to do) because it is connected with the relative. Strictly speaking, it cannot be called relative either, but this is deemed the only acceptable option in the circumstances.

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[8]For a detailed analysis of this divergence, see Pettit (1999:101-133).
[9]Newland (1999:14). The following points on the dGe lugs position follow Newland closely.

The rNying ma understanding is quite different. Dudjom Rinpoche[10] for example, makes a distinction between Outer Madhyamaka, which includes both Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika systems, and Great Madhyamaka, a more subtle and inner Madhyamaka.[11] During meditative absorption there is no difference between them; both realize the cessation of all elaborate signs of subject-object dichotomy. But in meditational aftermath, the Outer Madhyamaka classifies the two truths by ascribing emptiness to the ultimate and appearances to the relative, while Great Madhyamaka determines the two truths according to whether abiding and apparitional natures are in harmony or disharmony (*gnas snang mthun mi mthun*).[12] The expanse of reality (*dharmadhātu, chos dbyings*), which is the ultimate, is the union (*zung 'jug*)[13] of appearance and emptiness without contradiction. This absence of contradiction is due to the fact there is no essential difference between the *dharmadhātu* on the one hand and, on the other, pristine cognition and the buddha-body which are naturally present and unconditioned. Dudjom Rinpoche (1991:207) describes ultimate reality as follows:

> *[It is] the continuum of the basis, the embodiment of indestructible reality, the great seal, the emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects, the mind in its natural state, the naturally present pristine cognition, and so forth. If known as such, no one can contradict that this reality is the conclusive definitive meaning.*

This presentation makes the difference between the two truths in terms of appearance and emptiness a *relative* distinction, carried out in post-meditation for the purposes of debate

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[10]sKyabs rje bDud 'joms rin po che was the head of the rNying ma school of Tibetan Buddhism until his death in 1987. For ease of reference, the Westernised spelling of his name is used here since it is the name he himself used in publication, and is that which is found in the bibliography.

[11]Dudjom Rinpoche (1991:169). Great Madhyamaka (*dbu ma chen po*) is also known as Yogācāra-Madhyamaka, which should not be confused with Yogācāra-Svātantrika. It integrates the views of both *rang stong* (all things are empty of their own inherent substantiality) and *gzhan stong* (all enlightened attributes are empty of extraneous—saṃsāric—phenomena). Dudjom Rinpoche's explanation of the Two Truths is selected here because it summarizes clearly and simply many of the points previously put forward by Mi-pham and kLong chen pa.

[12]ibid., p.206. Mi pham asserts the same thing (V.p.32).

[13]'Union' is used in this study to translate *zung 'jug (yuganaddha)*. Other scholars have variously translated it as 'union', 'unity', 'coalescence' and 'inextricably relational functioning'. It means a joining together such that the original elements are unrecognizable as separate elements. It is not like the intertwining of white and black threads to make a rope, but is more like the merging of milk and water.

and writing treatises. In this respect, it is helpful to have an indication of where the distinction is coming from. But if the ultimate is pervaded by gnosis (*ye shes*)[14] and non-duality of subject and object, it seems contradictory to differentiate appearance from emptiness. The Great Madhyamaka criterion helps to answer this objection, since for this latter view both appearance and emptiness are present simultaneously for every phenomenon, and the difference between the two truths lies only in the *relation* between these two: whether appearances are in harmony with emptiness or not. This was also Mi pham's view.[15] Furthermore, the rNying ma presentation does not base the distinction between the two truths on the *object* of knowledge. The ultimate reality is not conceived as an object of knowledge at all, since its description includes "the mind in its natural state". The rNying ma perspective on this appears to contradict the Sūtra passage in which the principle of the Two Truths is set out:

> *This is how the Tathāgata understood the two truths, relative and ultimate. [All] objects of knowledge* (shes bya) *are included in the relative and ultimate [truths]. Furthermore, the Blessed One utterly saw, knew and realized them as emptiness. That is why he is called 'Omniscient'. Of these [two truths], the Tathāgata saw that relative [truth] is the practice of the world, and ultimate [truth] is beyond words.*[16]

It is on account of the fact that the ultimate is beyond discursive thought, and beyond any subject-object dichotomy, that rNying ma pas consider it absurd to call it an 'object' that can be known by a consciousness since that description follows the subject-object model. Indeed, insofar as there are two sets of criteria for the two-truth distinction, one based on cognition in meditation and the other in post-meditation, if anything it could be argued that the distinction is based on the state of mind of the perceiver rather than the object perceived. Within each of these meditational situations, what are understood as the two truths are not seen as radically different from one another; they are not opposites, or con-

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[14]Depending on the context, I have translated *ye shes* either as 'gnosis' or as 'primordial wisdom'.
[15]See Pettit (1999:123) and also V. p.32.
[16]*Pitāputrasamāgama sūtra (yab dang sras mjal ba'i mdo)* P. zhi, 70a4-6. The Sanskrit fragments of this passage are incomplete.

tradictories, or mutually exclusive in any way. There is no sense that they are distinct existents. Objects and the minds that apprehend them are both pervaded by non-duality. This is possible because the ultimate nature of objects is no other than the ultimate nature of minds.

Let us critique mKhas grub's appraisal of Śāntarakṣita in the light of Dudjom Rinpoche's explanation. First, mKhas grub is assuming that appearance and emptiness are two distinct existents and objects of knowledge, which Mi pham and Dudjom Rinpoche do not. On the basis of this, he argues that their union must be relative not ultimate, these two being mutually exclusive; while the rNying ma pas understand union (*zung 'jug*) to indicate a reality where dichotomies, opposites, distinctions and differentiation no longer obtain. So in the rNying ma pa terminology, there is no contradiction involved in the union of appearance and emptiness.

IX.1.3 The relationship between relative and ultimate

Mi pham addresses the relationship between the two truths in Topic 5 of his *Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me*, translated by John Pettit (1999) as *The Beacon of Certainty*.[17] Many of the points he makes imply difficulties with the system of the Two Truths itself. We will draw these out after first noting what Mi pham has to say. His first point is that neither of the two truths is more important than the other.[18] The ultimate cannot be established over and against the relative; rather their relation is that which pertains between method and

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[17]Mi pham develops his presentation of the two truths, and in particular of the two types of ultimate truth, in Topic 22 of the *mKhas 'jug*. This was written over 20 years after his commentary on the MAL, and is an expansion of the views expressed in this commentary. For an annotated translation see *The Conditioned and Unconditioned Chapter of Mi pham rgya mtsho's mKhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo* by Steven D. Goodman, M.A. thesis presented to the Department of Far Eastern Studies, University of Saskatoon, Canada, 1978. Of particular interest is Mi pham's assertion that the non-discursive ultimate is experientially realized (*rtogs pa*) through *so so rang rig*. gzung 'dzin med pa rnam par mi rtogs pa'i ye shes so so rang rig pas rtogs par bya ba ni rnam grangs min pa'i don dam yin te/ p.353.
[18]Pettit (1999:214ff).

result.

> *Without depending on an entity for examination,*
> *Its nonsubstantiality cannot be established—*
> *Therefore both substance and nonsubstance*
> *Are the same in being mere relativity.*[19]

Firstly, emptiness can only be established in relation to a given phenomenon, it does not 'exist' on its own. I can establish the emptiness of God, or of a person, or of aspects in perception, and so on, but I cannot establish emptiness in the abstract. Emptiness is the ultimate nature of appearance, and only by investigating appearances can we arrive at an understanding of their nature. But the implication of this, according to Mi pham, is that the two truths themselves are *both* relative in the sense that they are established in relation to each other, and by means of conventional language. This is significant. It means that the two truths are identified and established from a relative point of view, and not from an ultimate point of view since the latter is non-dual and free of discursive thought (*vikalpa*). It follows that what we term 'ultimate truth'—insofar as it is described as non-dual, free of discursive thought and so on—is *defined* as ultimate from a relative point of view. Strictly speaking, from the ultimate viewpoint there are no two truths.

> *When the ultimate* (dharmadhātu) *is taken as authority* (pramāṇa) *there is neither relative truth* (saṃvṛtisatya) *nor ultimate truth* (paramārthasatya).[20]

And as Mi pham himself writes in his *mKhas 'jug*:

> *Realizing that these two truths are, in the perfect sense, an indivisible equality is the final meaning—the most eminent among all objects of realization.*[21]

That is to say, the two truths are actually just a single truth from the ultimate point of view. It has therefore emerged that it is of paramount importance to state from which

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[19]Topic 5.2.1.1.2.1.2. Pettit (1999:214)
[20]From the *Ārya-Dharmadhātuprakṛtyasaṃbhedanirdeśasūtra*, cited at the beginning of Bhavya's *Madhyamakaratnapradīpa*, translated in Lindtner (1981:169).
[21]*mKhas 'jug* 14.4: de gnyis yang dag pa'i don du zung 'jug mnyam pa nyid du rtogs pa ni rtogs bya rnams kyi nang na mchog tu gyur pa mthar thug gi don no/ Text and translation in *Gateway to Knowledge* by Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche, vol.II, p.174.

point of view one is speaking when talking of the two truths, because even if the two truths themselves are not contradictories, the relative and ultimate *points of view* cannot be held simultaneously. One problem with the dGe lugs pa claim that the two truths are about different objects of knowledge is that this does not make clear from which standpoint the claim is being made. The issue is relevant, since all Buddhists accept there is a difference between the standpoint of an ordinary deluded being who takes appearances as truly existent, and the perspective of a buddha who realizes that the nature of all appearances is emptiness.

Whether or not the Two Truths properly refer to different standpoints or points of view is an issue of much debate between Tibetan Buddhist schools.[22] In order to analyse the debate critically, it is useful to distinguish with Streng (1967:17) between philosophical truths and religious truths. Philosophical truths are about states of affairs, but religious truths are not only about states of affairs; they are able to transform a person's life in a radical sense. Eckel (1980:48) accordingly distinguishes three structures of religious apprehension. 1) The mythical, where words are a manifestation of sacred reality; 2) the intuitive, where words point to sacred reality that cannot be expressed; and 3) the dialectical, where words bring insight by opposing misconceptions. Here, transformation is defined not by the reality to which words lead but by the illusions out of which they lead. So religious apprehension of sacred truth, defined as truth about the universe just as it is, is not simply an intellectual insight but an experience. In Buddhism, Bhāvaviveka des-

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[22]In contradistinction to Newland's definition of the dGe lugs pa position, given above, there are numerous passages in Indian Buddhist literature that indicate that the principle of the Two Truths concerns the perspective of the knower just as much as the type of object known. In BCA IX.3 and 5, for instance, Śāntideva writes: "In the light of this, people are seen to be of two types: namely, the spiritually developed and the spiritually undeveloped. Of these, the world-view of the undeveloped is invalidated by the world-view of the spiritually developed. Ordinary people see existent things and also imagine them to be real, that is to say not as an illusion. It is in this regard that there is disagreement between the ordinary person and the spiritually developed." Translation by Crosby and Skilton (1995:115). Also, Bhāvaviveka's use of the qualifier *paramārthataḥ* is evidence of the ultimate as a point of view.

cribes the Mahāyāna goal of *śūnyatā* as an experience rather than an absolute reality.[23] In fact Bhāvaviveka goes into some detail in identifying the precise stage of meditational equipoise in which *śūnyatā* is apprehended.[24] He says it is when discursive ideas are stopped by insight into *śūnyatā* that objects of designation cease, for a yogi who dwells in emptiness dwells in the signlessness. This is why the reason to use designation ceases too. Consequently, the activity of the mind ceases. The vision of reality (*tattva darśana*) is to see neither presence nor absence, but a correct understanding of the nature of things. From passages such as these, it is clear that what is meant by 'standpoint' or 'point of view' in connection with the Two Truths refers to the soteriological stage of the subject's mental development insofar as this functions as a criterion of truth.

Mi pham then explains how he reconciles his assertion that the relative and ultimate are a union with the fact that the most eminent Buddhist authorities (like Nāgārjuna) find it necessary to differentiate them.

> *Since both entities and nonentities should both*
> *Be taken as bases for establishing emptiness,*
> *All appearances are just designations*
> *And emptiness too is just a mental designation. (...)*
> *Therefore appearance and emptiness*
> *Can each be conceived separately*
> *But in fact they are never different.*
> *Therefore, they are called "coalescent",*[25]
> *Since the confidence of seeing the nature of things*
> *Does not fall to any extreme.*

Then he places the logical approach to emptiness (such as that put forward by mKhas grub) quite precisely within the broad soteriological context.

> *In the perspective of the wisdom of authentic analysis*
> *Appearance and emptiness are considered to be*
> *A single essence with different aspects (...)*
> *Nonetheless, for beginners*

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[23]Eckel (1980:50). Chapter 18 of the *Prajñāpradīpa* makes this clear. For example, Bhāvaviveka writes (18.84) "emptiness, which is characterized by this complete quiescence of discursive ideas, is liberation" (transl. Eckel, 1980:217).

[24]The following description is taken from Eckel's translation of Chapter 18 (Eckel, 1980:223).

[25]This is Pettit's rendering of *zung 'jug*. This passage is Topic 5.2.2.1.2.1.21-3, in Pettit (1999:216).

They appear as negation and negandum;
At that time they are not combined as one.
When the nature of emptiness
Arises as appearance, one attains confidence.
Thus, everything is primordially empty,
And these appearances are empty (...)
This is the meaning of cutting off misconceptions
Through study and reflection.[26]

Mi pham asserts that 'emptiness' is a concept and word just like 'appearance' or any other, and according to commonly accepted Buddhist principles, both appearances and emptiness are therefore just mental designations.[27] Neither exists inherently, either independently or as a possible object of knowledge. Beginners on the path have to conceive of them separately as a pedagogical method for introducing them gradually to the non-affirmative negation of emptiness.[28] This use of logic and reasoning is soteriologically necessary, and aims to cut off misconceptions such as 'inherent existence'. However, study and reflection must be complemented by the third 'wisdom tool' of meditation, and the culmination of this process is a non-dual gnosis of the ultimate, what Mi pham calls 'a confidence' that no longer needs the support of reasoning. In fact at the moment of gnosis, all methods whatsoever are abandoned. In philosophical terms, by combining logic, reflection and meditation on the concepts of 'appearance' and 'emptiness', one reaches an understanding of 'appearance and emptiness' that is both an experience of the union of the two and, at one and the same time, a transformation of one's own mind such that knowledge is non-discursive. Mi pham's claim is that the Buddhist method takes one beyond the limits of rational knowledge and thereby leads to a gnosis that is impossible for the

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[26]Topic 5.2.2.1.2.1.2.4-5.2.2.1.3 in Pettit (1999:216).
[27]See the discussion on the designated status of wholes and parts in Chapter V. It is noted there that dGe lugs pas put forward different definitions of what it means to be an existent or object of knowledge.
[28]It has been widely noted in Buddhist treatises as well as in the research literature that one of the primary purposes of the Two Truth principle is a pedagogical one. See, for example, Lindtner (1981:162); Sprung (1973:46); Murti (1960:253). Mi pham also states in his *mKhas 'jug* 14.1: "The buddhas have taught the two truths, the relative and the ultimate, for the sake of establishing [certainty about] the nature of knowable things." yang sangs rgyas rnams kyis shes bya'i rang bzhin gtan la dbab pa'i phyir kun rdzob dang don dam pa'i bden pa gnyis su gsungs te/ In *Gateway to Knowledge*, vol.II, p.174. The idea can be traced back to Nāgārjuna's *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* 21-23 (in Lindtner, 1982:108-9).

rational mind.[29] So if it is described at all, it cannot be characterized in terms that properly apply to the rational mind.

Mi pham[30] follows Śāntarakṣita[31] and Bhāvaviveka[32] in positing two different types of ultimate.[33] One is the definitive ultimate (*don dam mtshan nyid pa*) which is non-conceptual and realized by sublime beings (*ārya; 'phags pa*) in meditative equipoise; this final, non-conceptual ultimate (*aparyāyaparamārtha; rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam*) is the union (*yuganaddha; zung 'jug*) of appearance and emptiness understood by gnosis. As it is free of elaborations (*niṣprapañca; spros bral*) it is beyond affirmation and negation. The other type of ultimate is the conceptual ultimate (*paryāyaparamārtha; rnam grangs pa'i don dam*) considered as a non-affirmative negation (*prasajyapratiṣedha; med dgag*). It is called 'ultimate' only because it is in accord (*mthun pa*) with the ultimate. It is accessed by a "valid cognition investigating the conceptual ultimate" (*don dam rnam grangs pa'i tha snyad dpyod pa'i tshad ma*). For Mi pham, negations of this sort are a suitable way for beginners to conceptualize the ultimate; but because it relies on conceptual formulae this type of ultimate does not represent the final ultimate that is free of elaboration. To assert that 'the ultimate is free of conceptual thought', for example, is a conceptual formulation in itself. It is adequate to emptiness as an object of discursive thought in the post-meditative state (*pṛṣṭhalabdha; rjes thob*) but not to the non-conceptual gnosis of sublime equipoise (*āryajñāna; 'phags pa'i ye shes*).

Although Mi pham's view may be surprising to those who have studied Madhyamaka through dGe lugs pa eyes, he asserts that the non-conceptual ultimate in the Yogācāra-

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[29]See also BCA IX.2.
[30]V.p.37ff.
[31]MAL 70.
[32]*Tarkajvāla*, P. 27.5.7-28.1.1.
[33]Pettit (1999:109-110).

Svātantrika system is exactly the same as the ultimate accepted by the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka of Candrakīrti.

> *A person who, by means of practice connected with this [concordant ultimate] attains the experience of the ultimate truth in itself may be called either Prāsaṅgika or Svātantrika and so on, depending on the way he [or she] makes or does not make assertions with regard to the post-meditation period. But one should know that in the ultimate realization there is no difference between them. They both come to have the wisdom of the Āryas.*[34]

Finally, Mi pham emphasizes that a key difference between Prāsaṅgikas and Svātantrikas is that the latter analyse relative phenomena whereas the former do not.[35] This means that for Svātantrikas there are two kinds of valid reasoning: relative and absolute, each with different spheres of application. So for instance, valid reasoning on the relative level does not consider the question of whether phenomena exist externally or as mental projections on the ultimate level; it merely assesses phenomena as they appear. It is crucial to be clear about this distinction, because according to Mi pham one of the chief Prāsaṅgika criticisms of Svātantrika stems from a confusion about these two.

> *But confusing the two kinds of reasoning [i.e. relative and ultimate] some people believe that to apply a tenet that investigates relative phenomena is incompatible with the Prāsaṅgika view [because Prāsaṅgikas] accept phenomena without analysis, according to general consensus. It should be said, however, that [in the context of logic applied on the relative level] it is acceptable to say that entities exist according to their characteristics, or that they are established by valid cognition and so forth. The important thing is to distinguish [i.e. not to confuse] the kind of valid cognition used in the assessment. Because if relative phenomena are assessed from the standpoint of ultimate valid cognition, they would not be even slightly established by this reasoning. They would be just like darkness that disappears in a bright light. [On the other hand] if the assessment is made from the point of view of relative valid cognition, phenomena are [on this level] established ineluctably and undeniably. Therefore, however much relative reasoning may be used to examine phenomena in accordance with their mode of appearance, this investigation will never become an ultimate examination.*[36]

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[34]V.p.37. tshul 'di lta bu la bsgoms bas nyams myong gis sus reg kyang gang zag des rjes thob kyi khas len mdzad tshul la ltos te thal rang sogs ming ci btags kyang rung/ rtogs pa'i mtho dman rdul tsal med par 'phags pa'i gzigs pa gnad gcig tu 'bab pa shes par bya'o/

[35]V.p.26ff.

[36]V. pp.27-28. gang dag tshad ma gnyis kyis gzhal tshul bsra bsrer gyur te/ ma brtags ma dpyad pa'i snang tsam las dpyad pa'i grub mtha' zhig khas len na thal 'gyur ba'i lugs dang ches 'gal snyam du sems par mi bya ste/ de yang 'dir su zhig gis chos 'di dag rang gi mtsan nyid kyis grub bam zhe'am/ de'i ngo bo tshad mas grub pa sogs gang yin kyang rung ste/ 'jal byed kyi tshad ma shan phyed pa gal che ste/ don dam pa'i tshad ma'i ngos nas gzhal ba yin na ni/ snang ba'i mdun na mun pa ltar de'i ngor nam yang mi 'grub pas na tsang zad kyang grub pa gzhag tu med la/ tha snyad pa'i tshad ma'i ngos nas gzhal ba yin na ni/ de'i ngor bslu

It follows from Mi pham's view that if Svātantrikas assert that appearances exist by way of their characteristics in relative truth, this has no bearing whatsoever on how they are viewed in ultimate truth. In other words, one can draw no implications at all from this in terms of the alleged true existence of phenomena by way of their characteristics. The two domains are conceptually distinct and must remain so if they are not to be confused.

IX.1.4 The union of the Two Truths

Mi pham's formulation of the Two Truths aims to reconcile a number of difficult doctrinal points into a coherent picture. On the one hand there are statements in the Buddhist literature which indicate that the ultimate truth is dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*)[37] while on the other hand there are assertions that the ultimate truth is non-conceptual.[38] There are assertions to the effect that the ultimate can only be realized in dependence upon a specific entity in relative truth,[39] while elsewhere the ultimate is held not to be dependent on anything.[40] And whilst certain passages state that in ultimate truth the Mādhyamika does not hold any view (*dṛṣṭi*),[41] other passages do seem to express what could be called 'the ultimate Madhyamaka view'.[42] Every Tibetan tradition has tried to make sense of these various claims. It is argued here that Mi pham's general presentation is perhaps the only way of making the MAL's approach to the Two Truths a coherent one.

The MAL harbours a potential problem that threatens to defeat Śāntarakṣita's entire argument and render the treatise philosophically worthless. Śāntarakṣita demonstrates that

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med bsnyon med du grub pas des tha snyad kyi snang tshul dang mthun par ji tsam dpyad kyang tshad ma'i gzhung nas skye ba snga phyi sogs yod par sgrub pa'i dpyad pa la sogs pa ji lta ba bzhin tu don dam dpyod byed du mi 'gro'o/

[37]MMK XXIV, 18 and 40.

[38]BCA IX.2; MMK (last line of dedicatory verses).

[39]BCA IX.139.

[40]MMK XXV.12.

[41]MMK XXVII.30; YṢ 50.

[42]MMK.I.1.

every possible object of knowledge (*shes bya*) is neither unitary nor therefore made of multiple units; nothing is either one or many. But the one thing that he has not applied his argument to is the Two Truths. He builds his discussion on the Mahāyāna framework of there being two truths, which means *2 x 1* truth. He does not question his metalogical assumptions. And this is philosophically serious, because if truth is one, and there are two ones, then an opponent could claim that 'truth' (*bden pa*) is merely the Buddhist term for the absolute reality that Buddhism so ostensibly and persistently denies. Indeed, while some scholars such Burnouf and the early De La Vallée Poussin have understood the Buddhist ultimate as nihilistic, others like Stcherbatsky have taken it to be a veiled affirmation of an Absolute Reality that cannot be described.[43] If any positive ontological status is given to the highest ultimate, then Buddhism would be no different than Vedānta.

There are two ways in which Mādhyamikas defend themselves against an objection of this sort. The first is to say that the ultimate, namely emptiness (*śūnyatā*), is itself empty. All Mahāyāna classifications of the different types of emptiness include 'the emptiness of emptiness'.[44] This is considered important to prevent the practitioner's attachment to the view of emptiness. So in this way, Mādhyamikas have explicitly stated that they do not posit the ultimate truth as a 'truly' existing truth; and in Śāntarakṣita's terminology, this means that ultimate truth is not unitary. A second Madhyamaka defence can be found in Nāgārjuna's *Vigrahavyāvartanī* XXI-XXIV, where it is argued that even truthful Buddhist doctrinal discourse is empty of *svabhāva*.[45] That is to say, neither the view of emptiness

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[43]See the Introduction to *A Question of Nihilism: Bhāvaviveka's Response to the Fundamental Problems of Madhyamaka Philosophy*, by Malcolm Eckel (1980), which contains an overview of the different views of the Buddhist ultimate in Western scholarship, and the question of what ontological status is attributed to it. Of interest too is Edward Conze's 'The Ontology of the Prajñāpāramitā' in PEW III.2 (1953), pp.117-129.
[44]This is found in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in 25,000 Verses, and in the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, for example. See also the Mahāvyutpatti verse XXXVII, 1-18; and *Saṃdhinirmocana sūtra*, VIII, p.190-1. The latter reads: mtshan ma de'i gnyen po stong pa nyid de nyid yid la byed pa'i stong pa nyid kyi mtshan ma gang yin pa de stong pa nyid stong pa nyid kyis rnam par sel lo/
[45]*The Dialectical Method of Nāgārjuna (Vigrahavyāvartanī)*, transl. K. Bhattacharya, eds. E.H. Johnston and Arnold Kunst, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, pp.17-19.

nor discourse on emptiness, should be understood as having an inherently existing and absolute nature. In connection with the Svātantrikas, therefore, this principle is significant in that it indicates that the concordant ultimate is empty.

Mi pham's idea of the union of the two truths also safeguards the validity of the MAL. Especially so as the union (*zung 'jug*) to which he refers is beyond conceptuality and differentiation, and hence beyond enumeration. This means that the oneness etymologically implied by the English word 'union' here does not refer to the number one as the first in a series; it is not a 'unit', it is an ineffable coming-together. (The Tibetan *zung 'jug* does not have any arithmetical connotation.) For Madhyamaka to be coherent, the two truths themselves must be empty (*stong pa*). They cannot be *real* categories overarching the knowable, like the *padārtha*-s of the Vaiśeṣikas. And if the two truths are empty, this means they do not exist ultimately and exist only in relative truth. This is in fact exactly what Mi pham maintains, namely that both relative and ultimate are relatively established, which is why the conceptual ultimate must be distinguished from the experience of non-dual gnosis. This is also what Dudjom Rinpoche suggests when he says that in meditation there is no differentiation between the two truths, and this occurs only in post-meditation. It will be argued that this rNying ma view is consistent with dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgika, that is, with what came to be seen by many in Tibet as orthodox Madhyamaka.

IX.2 The Two Truths in the MAL

IX.2.1 The MAL verses

Śāntarakṣita sets out his approach to the Two Truths in the following verses:

> **[63] Therefore these entities are held to be characterized only by relative [truth]. If you [still] maintain that they are actual selves then what can I say?**
> *de phyir dngos po 'di dag ni// kun rdzob kho na'i mtshan nyid 'dzin//*
> *gal te 'di bdag*[46] *don 'dod na// de la kho bos ci zhig bya//*

[46]Ichigō's critical edition of this line has '*dag*' for '*bdag*'. According to Mi pham's commentary on this verse

[64] One should understand that the nature of relative truth is (1) that which is delightful[47] only as long as it is not investigated critically, (2) that which is subject to arising and decay, and (3) that which has causal efficiency.
ma brtags gcig pu nyams dga' zhing// skye dang 'jig pa'i chos can pa//
don byed pa dag nus rnams kyi// rang bzhin kun rdzob pa yin rtogs//

[65] Even that which is agreeable and acceptable as long as it is not investigated critically implies the production of similar successive effects conditioned by their own successive causes.
brtags pa ma byas nyams dga' ba'ang// bdag rgyu snga ma snga ma la//
brten nas phyi ma phyi ma yi// 'bras bu de 'dra 'byung ba yin//

[66] Therefore [for an opponent to say] "if relative [existence] has no [truly existing] cause, it could not exist [at all]"—that won't do. If there is a truly existing [cause] that expropriates [the relative], tell [me] what it is!
de phyir kun rdzob rgyu med na// rung min zhes pa'ang legs ma yin//[48]
gal te 'di yi nyer len pa// yang dag yin na de smros shig//

[67] We reject the intrinsic nature of all entities postulated by those among our opponents who follow the way of logic. Therefore there is nothing to be refuted [in our system].
dngos po kun gyi rang bzhin ni// rigs pa'i lam gyi rjes 'brang ba//
gzhan dag 'dod pa sel bar byed// de phyir rgol ba'i gnas med do//

[68] Even with the greatest effort, it is not possible to criticize in any way someone [like myself] who admits neither existence, nor non-existence, nor both existence and non-existence.
yod dang med dang yod med ces// khas mi len pa gang yin pa//
de la nan tan ldan pas kyang// cir yang klan ka bya mi nus//

[69] Therefore, ultimately there is no entity that can be established in reality. Because of that, the Tathāgatas taught the non-production of all *dharma*-s.
de phyir yang dang nyid du na// dngos po gang yang grub pa med//
de phyir de bzhin gshes rnams kyis// chos rnams thams cad ma skyes gsungs//

[70] Some say that [non-production] is the highest truth since it is in accord with the highest truth. But in my view, the highest truth is that which is completely free of all [conceptual] elaboration.
dam pa'i don dang 'thun pa'i phyir// 'di ni dam pa'i don zhes bya//
yang dag tu na spros pa yi// tshogs rnams kun las de grol yin//

[84] Since causal relation is not denied in relative truth, there is no confusion as to the distinction between defilement and purification, and so on.
rgyu dang 'bras bu'i dngos po ni// kun rdzob tu ni mi bzlog pas//

(C. p.311) *dag* used as a plural particle is found in inaccurate editions, and *bdag* is the correct version. So rather than reading 'if these are held to exist ultimately' the line should read 'if these are held to be actual selves'.

[47]Mi pham points out that when Śāntarakṣita defines the relative as 'delightful', he does not intend to exclude those things which frighten or horrify us. He is referring to all those phenomena that 'delight' the consciousness by seducing it and eliciting attachment. Delight is broader than pleasurable sensation.

[48]Ichigō's transliteration of this Tibetan verse has omitted the negative in the second line, which has naturally impacted on his translation. I am indebted to John Pettit for my understanding of this verse.

kun nas nyon mongs rnam byang sogs// rnam par gzhag pa 'khrugs pa med//

[85] Indeed, since the law of causation has been established, it is also possible in our system to gather the pure accumulations [of merit and wisdom].
'di ltar rgyu dang 'bras bu yi// chos 'di rnam par gzhag pas na//
tshogs rnams dri ma med pa yang// gzung 'di nyid la rung ba yin//

[91] That which is cause and effect is nothing but mind-only. It is established that knowledge is that which is self-validated.
rgyu dang 'bras bur gyur pa yang// shes pa 'ba zhig kho na ste//
rang gis grub ba gang yin pa// de ni shes par gnas pa yin//

[92] Based on the standpoint of Cittamātra, one must know that external entities do not [truly] exist. Based on this standpoint [i.e. of the non-intrinsic nature of all *dharma*-s] one must know that there is no self at all even in that [i.e. in Cittamātra].
sems tsam la ni brten nas su// phyi rol dngos med shes par bya//
tshul 'dir brten nas de la yang// shin tu bdag med shes par bya//

IX.2.2 Relative truth

In distinguishing the two truths, Mādhyamikas make use of two means of evaluation: reasoning which evaluates from the ultimate point of view (*don dam dpyod byed kyi tshad ma*) and reasoning which operates on the level of conventions (*tha snyad dpyod byed kyi tshad ma*).[49] Everyone in the Tibetan tradition would agree that Mādhyamikas, in general, employ the first, while Abhidharma and the logicians employ the second.[50] In the light of these distinctions, we can see that Śāntarakṣita's definition of relative truth is strongly influenced by the logicians. When he characterizes the relative as causally efficient, he is primarily following Dharmakīrti[51] who also influenced Jñānagarbha.[52] However, he is

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[49]See Lipman (1992:27-8).
[50]ibid.
[51]In PV III.2 and 3, Dharmakīrti defines a thing (*vastu; dngos po*) as that which is capable of performing a function (*arthakriyāsamartha; don byed nus pa*). Dreyfus (1997:66-7 ff.) discusses the ambiguity and tension in the way the term *arthakriyā* is used by Dharmakīrti. It has both ontological and epistemological meanings. According to the former, causal efficiency is a criterion of the ultimately real (PV III.3a: arthakriyāsamartham yat tad atra paramārthasat), in line with Dharmakīrti's Sautrāntika view that things exist independently of the observer. According to the latter, causal efficiency is the criterion which distinguishes valid knowledge from invalid knowledge. The latter sense is derived from the former, for only on the basis of their inherent causal capacity can objects fulfil such a function. This ambiguity is a function of his dualistic system involving the real-perceptual and the constructed-conceptual. Causal efficiency also differentiates specifically characterized phenomena (*svalakṣaṇa; rang mtshan*) from generally characterized phenomena (*sāmānayalakṣaṇa; spyi mtshan*) or universals (*sāmānaya; spyi*). The question is whether Śāntarakṣita is able to use the epistemological definition as a characteristic of his (true) relative truth without the ontological entailment of the former definition. The status of *mtshan* is ambiguous.

closer to Jñānagarbha's interpretation of *arthakriyā* than to Dharmakīrti's for he unambiguously uses it as a characteristic of the relative. It should follow that even the characteristics (*mtshan*) of relative phenomena are relative, and not truly existing as dGe lugs pas believe they are in Svātantrika. We will note Mi pham's commentary on this point below.

When Śāntarakṣita defines the relative as "that which is acceptable when not investigated critically", it would be easy to think that he is following the Madhyamaka approach of Prāsaṅgika scholars in the line of Candrakīrti who accept the unanalysed worldly view as the relative truth.[53] Candrakīrti did not apply his own criterion of truth to assess what constitues true and false relative truth. For him, both are simply a function of what is conventionally accepted in the world. If most people think the Earth is flat, then in his system that would count as true relative truth. The Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika would not judge its truth value in any way. But for a Svātantrika such as Śāntarakṣita, the relative is always analysed. The use of Cittamātra as an account of the relative is an approach based on philosophical constructs above and beyond the worldly transactional analysis of ordinary people. So instead, when Śāntarakṣita accepts appearances as long as they are not investigated critically, he means that they should not be investigated with logic investigating the ultimate. So his point is that even though phenomena do not truly exist, they appear, and the relative is about making sense of our experience of those appearances (MALV 64).

Mi pham points out the implications of Śāntarakṣita's definition.

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[52]SDV 12: "True and false relative [truth] are similar in appearance, but they are distinguished by their ability or inability to produce effective action." snang du 'dra yang don byed dag// nus pa'i phyir dang mi nus phyir// yang dag yang dag ma yin pas// kun rdzob kyi ni dbye ba byas// For Jñānagarbha, causal efficiency is unambiguously characteristic of the relative because both the entity and the causal action are empty. The distinction between true and false is therefore based on appearances and common consent.
[53]In MAV VI.25, Candrakīrti writes:"What the world considers to be perceived by the six unimpaired senses is true from the worldly point of view; everything else is false from the worldly point of view." gnod pa med pa'i dbang po drug rnams kyis// bzung ba gang zhig 'jig rten gyis rtogs te// 'jig rten nyid la bden yin lhag ma ni// 'jig rten nyid las log par rnam par gzhag//

> *The essence of the relative is mere appearance, empty of truth. If this were [something that was] established the way it appears it would not be relative and similarly there would not then be [anything] ultimate either. The relative here [designates] solely that [which appears] without being established in the way it appears, and by this very [definition] the ultimate has been established as well. Since all phenomena are devoid of nature ultimately and are free of being unitary or multiple, these mere appearances are characterized as relative.*[54]

By defining the relative as that which is not rationally established, Śāntarakṣita automatically implies that anything that existed ultimately would be rationally established. Relative and ultimate are defined in relation and in opposition to each other. This verse sums up the conclusion of all the arguments in verses 2-62: no phenomenon can be rationally established as truly existent, therefore all phenomena are relative and not ultimate. But the link between the ultimate and rational establishment is problematic, because at the same time the ultimate is held to be non-conceptual. Even if we leave this obvious paradox to one side and accept that we are actually talking about the concordant ultimate here rather than the highest ultimate, Śāntarakṣita's view would be as follows: (1) for *x* to be truly established, *x* must be rationally established; (2) the reasoning that establishes true existence belongs to the concordant ultimate; (3) the concordant ultimate is inherently rational but the highest ultimate is totally non-discursive. So what precisely is the relationship between the concordant ultimate and the non-discursive ultimate? And between reason and non-conceptual gnosis?

Śāntarakṣita goes on to define relative truth in terms of impermanence and causal efficiency. Mi pham's commentary explains what is meant here by impermanence at great length.[55] His explanation is based on verse 65 where Śāntarakṣita makes it clear he is

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[54]C. p.312. snang tsam bden pas stong pa 'di kun rdzob kyi ngo bo yin la/ gal te 'di snang ba ltar grub pa zhig na ni 'di kun rdzob ma yin la/ de ltar na don dam yang med par 'gyur zhing/ 'dir snang yang de ltar ma grub pa kho na yin pas 'di kun rdzob yin la de ltar na don dam pa'ang de nyid kyis grub pa yin pa dang/ chos thams cad gcig dang du mar bral ba'i don dam par rang bzhin med pa de'i phyir/ snang tsam 'di la kun rdzob kyi mtshan nyid thob par gyur ba yin pas/

[55]This part of his commentary is an instance where he goes into great detail on a topic which was an issue

talking about entities that exist from moment (*kṣaṇa; skad cig*) to moment, and that are produced from causes that are similarly momentary. Impermanence goes hand in hand with the third definitional characteristic of causal efficiency in the sense that both together serve to define dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda; rten 'byung*) as a characteristic of relative phenomena. Mi pham asserts that no other theory of causality is meant here, that is, no causation that involves truly existing, substantial causes and/or effects.[56] In fact verse 66 of the MAL states that in Śāntarakṣita's definition of the relative there are no truly existing causes. Dependent origination is a way of accounting for causality in the case of entities that do not inherently exist.

Śāntarakṣita does not distinguish in the MAL between true and false relative truth.[57] One might object that his principle of causal efficiency implies that anything held to exist that is devoid of causal efficiency does not fit into the definition of relative and must belong to some third category. Take the difference between water and a mirage: while water can effectively quench one's thirst a mirage cannot; lacking in causal efficiency, the mirage would therefore be neither relative nor ultimate. According to Mi pham, although there is nothing wrong in distinguishing true and false relative truths in relative truth, the reason that Śāntarakṣita does not do so is because he investigates the relative from the point of

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for him, though it was not an issue for Śāntarakṣita. Mi pham's arguments are intended to counter dGe lugs pa interpretations regarding the permanence of phenomena, and he cites numerous scriptural passages in his defence. He then extends his polemics from impermanence to the dGe lugs pa notion that absence and negation are existents. Mi pham's arguments against the dGe lugs pas warrant separate philosophical appraisal. It is interesting to note how Mi pham effectively uses the MAL as one of the sources for his own views.

[56]C. p.317.

[57]On the basis of dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po's *Precious Garland of Tenets*, Shotaro Iida (1973:66) asserts that Śāntarakṣita (like Bhāvaviveka) distinguishes true (*tathyāsaṃvṛti*) and false relative truth (*mithyāsaṃvṛti*). However Ichigō (1985:LXII-LXIII) disagrees. Śāntarakṣita makes no such distinction in the MAL, and Ichigō therefore states that for Śāntarakṣita *saṃvṛti* always refers to *tathyāsaṃvṛti*. Although it is correct that no such distinction is made in the body text of the MAL, there is a similar type of distinction in the *vṛtti* where Śāntarakṣita refers to authentic relative truth. MALV 64: skye ba med la sogs pa'ang yang dag pa'i kun rdzob tu togs pa yin du zin kyang zhes gsungs pa'i phyir/

However, bLo gsal's *grub mtha'* (XII.2ab) allows for exceptions to the general rule that Svātantrikas distinguish true and false relative, and although Śāntarakṣita is not named he would fit this category. rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma pa 'ga' zhig la 'di dag kyang yang dag pa'i kun rdzob yin no// "For certain Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas, even these [appearances, i.e. floating hairs and double moons] are true relative [truth]." See Mimaki (1982:142-3).

view of valid cognition, primarily following Dharmakīrti. It follows that entities that are not causally efficient are simply non-existent.

So Śāntarakṣita adopts Cittamātra in relative truth insofar as he follows its account of the functioning of mere appearances but he does not adopt the Cittamātra model of causation. Is this problematic? What does it mean in terms of the statement in verse 91 that his system follows Cittamātra in relative truth? Is it in fact the case that he follows only selected parts of Cittamātra in relative truth? And if so, on what basis is that selection made? Were the selection to be made from a Madhyamaka perspective, do we not have a case of defining relative truth from the point of view of ultimate truth, and thereby not unifying but muddling the two truths?

First, we should set out precisely what Śāntarakṣita takes from Cittamātra. In verse 66, he indicates that he does not accept any Cittamātrin position that posits a truly existing cause and that justifies this view on the grounds that without such a cause it is impossible to account for causation or appearances at all. This means, for example, that Śāntarakṣita does not accept any Nirākāravādin position that asserts a truly existing consciousness. In verse 79, he accepts the Cittamātra theory which holds that mistaken ideas like 'existence' and 'non-existence' are caused by karmic seeds that have existed in our mental continua since beginningless time. In verse 80, he also reminds us that he rejects the existence of external entities, and any theory of causation involving external entities. However, Śāntarakṣita does not espouse an extreme immaterialist form of idealism such as that of Dharmapāla,[58] because in verse 81 he argues that ideas arise from dependent origination

[58]Dharmapāla's thinking is described as an extreme form of immaterialist idealism by mKhan chen Pad ma shes rab. To evaluate this view one must consider that Dharmapāla's enterprise aimed at a synthesis of Yogācāra and Madhyamaka. He attempted to bring together the Two Truths of Madhyamaka with the Three Natures of Yogācāra. He distinguished the Two Truths on the basis of discursiveness/non-discursiveness and then ascribed *parikalpita* and *paratantra* to the relative and *pariniṣpanna* to the ultimate. Thus Dharmapāla extended the Cittamātrin three aspects of mind to three categories that embrace all phenomena: the

affecting the mind, while in verse 82 he allows for material phenomena to arise from the successively preceding moments of their own continua, like a sprout from a seed. So mental and material phenomena arise through dependent origination from their own respective species. But this does not entail a hidden assumption that matter and mind are truly existing categories that overarch the real: neither material phenomena nor mental phenomena exist inherently, neither do their categories. Mind and matter are conceptual designations and exist on the relative level in terms of distinct types of causal efficiency and so on, but they are not posited as ultimate: in this respect, Śāntarakṣita's view is a classic Madhyamaka view. So when he indicates in verse 79 that the empirical world arises from karmic propensities, perhaps for Śāntarakṣita this means that phenomena are validly posited as the 'crystallization' or 'deposit' of the mind (*rtog pa'i zhag pa'i tse grub*) which would point to dependent origination.[59]

On reflection, it should come as no surprise (despite the comments made by Mi pham and noted in Chapter VIII) that Śāntarakṣita does not import the entire Cittamātra tenet system wholesale in relative truth. If he did, that would imply that the mind is accepted as an absolute from the relative point of view! This would make no sense and would make a mockery of the Two Truths framework. Indeed, this is one of the downfalls of Dharmapāla's synthesis. Instead, Śāntarakṣita takes the Cittamātra description of empirical reality and uses it as his own description of the relative, but excludes from it any ontological commitments that were embedded within it. This means, fundamentally, that he replaces

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assumption here is that all phenomena are entirely mental in nature. See Keenan, p.122; 249b28, Dharmapāla's commentary to Āryadeva's CS, chapter XVI.

His synthesis is problematic. It makes it difficult to account for the validity of language, a principle that Dharmapāla upholds; and it ignores the Cittamātrin tenet that while the *parikalpita* does not exist and is illusory, the constructing activity of *paratantra* does exist. The status of *paratantra* within relative truth is therefore unclear. Śāntarakṣita's own synthesis adopts a quite different approach that avoids these particular pitfalls.

[59]The idea that the empirical world arises from karmic propensities is not specifically Cittamātrin or idealist. It can be interpreted in the light of any Buddhist philosophy and is found, for example, in *Abhidharmakośa* ch.4.1a.

its model of causation (where there are truly existing causes that produce effects) with the Madhyamaka equivalent, namely dependent origination. This is a vital point, because if causal efficiency is one of the defining characteristics of the relative, and the relative is held to follow Cittamātra, it is essential to know that Śāntarakṣita's system actually understands causation according to Madhyamaka.[60]

But the very fact that Śāntarakṣita made this substitution in causal theories shows that he is defining the relative from an ultimate standpoint. For within the sole domain of the relative, what can the criteria of ontological truth ever be? As soon as the relative involves valid cognition and degrees of truth (his soteriological hierarchy of philosophical views illustrates that he believed there was a way of assessing degrees of truth), it necessarily blurs the boundaries between the two truths. Similarly, the fact that Śāntarakṣita posits two types of ultimate truth further blurs the distinction between the two truths since the concordant ultimate is in fact only relatively ultimate! One can sympathize with those who might want to reject his approach. But in the end, the big question is whether it is ever possible for a Buddhist philosopher of any persuasion to resolve the matter any better than this. In other words, is it Śāntarakṣita's approach that is faulty, or is it the framework of the Two Truths itself?

There is a further problem with Śāntarakṣita's acceptance of dependent origination in relative truth. His position is at odds with that of Bhāvaviveka who asserts that *pratītya-samutpāda* is ultimate truth and not relative truth.[61] In his *Tarkajvāla*[62] he distinguishes the highest ultimate (*paramārthasatya*) from the concordant ultimate (*sāṁketikapara-*

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[60]This may justify Mi pham's assertion that Śāntarakṣita accepts the *ālayavijñāna*. If he does, he would be stripping the concept of its ontological commitments and accepting it as a non-inherently existing factor within dependent origination. Defined in this way, it becomes acceptable to a Mādhyamika.
[61]Ichigō (1985:LXXXVII-XC).
[62]P. 64a7-8. See Ejima (1980:24-25).

mārthasatya), respectively the truth that can be attained without conscious effort (*mngon par 'du byed pa med par 'jug pa*) and that which is attained by conscious effort (*mngon par 'du byed pa dang bcas par 'jug pa*). In the latter category he places non-conceptual knowledge, the teaching of dependent origination, and wisdom acquired through listening study and meditation. These three are also called *tathyāsaṃvṛti*.[63] Similarly, Kamalaśīla includes dependent origination within the concordant ultimate.[64] So why does Śānta-rakṣita characterize dependent origination as relative?

In verse 71 of the MAL, Śāntarakṣita defines non-production (*skye ba med pa; anutpāda*) as the concordant ultimate. His view is that non-production is asserted in concordant ultimate truth while production (in the form of *pratītyasamutpāda*) is asserted in relative truth.[65] So, for example, in relative truth Śāntarakṣita might say that my fear of spiders is produced by certain karmic seeds that have been dwelling in my mental continuum since beginningless time, whereas in ultimate truth he would say that neither spiders, nor karmic seeds, nor my fear, nor my mental continuum inherently exist. However, it can be objected that Śāntarakṣita's definition of relative truth is defective, because it is not in accord with the passage in the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa Sūtra* defining relative truth and which he himself cites in the *vṛtti* (MALV 64).[66]

> *What, then, is relative truth? It is all the conventional designations of the world, and [all] that which is explained by words, language and signs. What is the ultimate truth? It is the stage where there is no activity of mind, not to mention of words.*[67]

Śāntarakṣita connects his definition to the first part of this *sūtra* passage, but never addresses the question of the second. Thus in his *vṛtti* on the same verse, he writes:

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[63]P. 58b2-3.
[64]*Bhāvanakrama* I. p.199, 7-9.
[65]See Ichigō (1985:LX-XCVII) for a detailed discussion of this view and its antecedents.
[66]Ichigō (1985:204). *Akṣayamatinirdeṣa Sūtra* P [34] 53.5.1-2.
[67]de la kun rdzob kyi bden pa gang zhe na/ 'jig rten gyi tha snyad ji snyed pa dang/ yi ge dang skad dang brda bstan pa dag go// don dam pa'i bden pa ni gang la sems kyi rgyu ba yang med na yi ge rnams lta ci smos...

> *"Relative conventions" refer to the world of sentient and inanimate beings; it is concerned with the experiencer and the experienced since it includes the successful performance of human actions.*[68]

Kamalaśīla counters this weakness by developing his category of false relative truth which he associates with ordinary verbal conventions that do not have as their objects any of the characteristics of those things which arise by dependent origination.[69] This includes not only perceived entities that are considered to exist inherently, but also words that designate universals as their objects, because universals are non-existent in this system. In conclusion, then, there is no clear agreement between Svātantrikas about the status of dependent origination because they have divergent definitions of what relative truth is.

Finally, we need to consider the issue of characteristics as markers of phenomena in relative truth. We noted in Chapter V.6 above that according to dGe lugs pa doxographers, Svātantrika is defined as a system that asserts inherent existence (*rang bzhin gyis grub pa*), existence 'from its own side' (*rang ngos nas grub pa*) and existence by way of own character (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*) in relative truth. Are there indications in the MAL that this was indeed Śāntarakṣita's viewpoint? If we define inherent existence as a synonym of true existence (*bden pa yod pa*), then it is clear that Śāntarakṣita rejects the inherent existence of the relative insofar as he solely accepts mere appearances arising in dependent origination.

On the evidence of all the arguments that Śāntarakṣita has put forward in the course of the MAL, Mi pham does not accept that his system asserts any form of true existence, either in relative truth or in ultimate truth.[70] He holds simply that as a Svātantrika, Śāntarakṣita

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[68]MALV 64: sems can dang snod kyi bdag nyid kyi 'jig rten myong bar bya ba dang myong ba'i ngo bo'i tshul 'dir 'jig rten gyi tha snyad du dgongs pa ste/ byed pa'i sgrub pa yongs su bzung ba'i phyir ro/ P. 68b6-7.
[69]MALP 64: 'on te rten cing 'brel par 'bung ba don bya ba byed pa gnag rdzi yan chad la shin tu grags pa de nyid brda'i dbang gis kun rdzob kyi sgrar brjod ces bya ba rtog pa gnyis so// Ichigō (1985:203). P. 121a1-3.

asserts that things exist relatively according to their characteristics without any ontological commitment. In fact, any assertion of true existence properly belongs to statements about the ultimate, not the relative.

> *The [Prāsaṅgika] texts refute true existence, existence according to characteristics and so forth indiscriminately. But when one makes a distinction between these [terms as Svātantrikas do], it is important in order not to confuse people to distinguish the targets at which these two kinds of reasoning are directed. If this is not done, and if one tries to establish a tenet simply on the strength of verbal formulations, one will only tire oneself. Therefore in post meditation, when the [two truths] are differentiated, one must establish without confusion the two types of reasoning that assess them. If one fails to distinguish reasoning [that establishes] the relative from reasoning [that establishes] the ultimate, to say that one enters the Mahāyāna and attains enlightenment would be the same as saying that enlightenment exists ultimately.*
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> *(...) However, it should be understood that in this tradition [i.e. the Svātantrika] things are said to exist relatively according to their characteristics or else they are mind only. The opponent might object that the Prāsaṅgikas make assertions only for the sake of others and do not assert a position of their own. But this contradicts the fact that in post-meditation they explain the grounds and paths, and assert that phenomena are merely dependent arising.*[71]

In Mi pham's view, it is Bhāvaviveka and other Sautrāntika-Svātantrikas who define existence in relative truth as 'existence according to characteristics'. In this respect, he accepts the dGe lugs pa classification. But he argues that we would only be muddling the

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[70]V.p.26. gzhung 'dir ni shes bya'i chos kyi khong 'di na rang bzhin bden grub kyi dngos po cung zad cig kyang khas mi len pa yin te/

[71]V.p.29-30. des na gzhung rnams su bden grub dang rang mtshan gyis grub pa sogs la khyad med du dgag pa dang/ khyad par phye ste bshad pa lta bu sogs skye bo rnams mi rmongs par bya ba'i phyir tsad ma so sos gzhal tshul gyi gnad re yod pa shan ma phyed par tshig gi zer sgros tsam gyis grub mtha' phye pa shin tu thang cad do/ des na rjes thob shan 'byed pa'i skabs su tshad ma gnyis kyis gzhal ba'i rnam gzhag ma 'khrugs par 'jog dgos kyi/ shan phyed pa med par tha snyad du'ang dpyad pa tsam gyis don dam dpyod par 'gro ba lta bu na/ theg chen la zhugs pa'i gang zag 'tshang rgya ba yod ces khas blangs pa'ang don dam par yod par khas blangs pa lta bur 'gyur zhing/ (...) lugs des kyang tha snyad tsam du dngos po'i mtshan nyid grub pa dang/ sems tsam du smra ba'ang de ltar shes par gyis shig kho na re/ gal te de ni gzhan ngo tsam du khas blang gi rang lugs min no snyam na rang la rjes thob kyi skabs na lam 'bras kyi rnam gzhag dang rten ' byel tsam du khas len yod par bshad pa sogs dang 'gal lo/

two truths if we were to interpret any type of existence in the relative sphere as having an ultimate connotation. Mi pham distinguishes Sautrāntika-Svātantrikas from Yogācāra-Svātantrikas and implies that Śāntarakṣita does not accept existence according to characteristics because for him all phenomena are mind only. It follows that the dGe lugs pa doxography properly applies only to the Sautrāntika-Svātantrikas and not to Śāntarakṣita, and even in the case of the former Mi pham accuses the dGe lugs pas of confusing the two truths in the process of assessing its tenets.[72]

IX.2.3 Ultimate truth

In verse 70 of the MAL, Śāntarakṣita sets out a distinction between truth that is in accord with (*mthun pa*) the ultimate truth, and ultimate truth itself. The key difference is that the former is discursive while the latter is completely free of all elaboration (*tshogs rnam kun las grol yin*). As he writes in his *vṛtti*:

> *[The highest truth is that which] eradicates the net of fictional ideas such as existence and non-existence, production and non-production, emptiness and non-emptiness, and so forth.*[73]

This distinction was not at all new in Buddhism. We have already pointed out that Bhāvaviveka made a similar distinction in his *Tarkajvāla* using the same criterion. In the *Madhyamakahṛdaya* he describes knowledge of the ultimate as follows:

> *In order to show the knowledge of ultimate truth, [it is said]: [if]* prajñā *has the functioning of the complete breakthrough of the net of thought [construction] and has the 'penetrationless-penetration' into the ultimate which is devoid of unitariness and multiplicity, immaculate [as] space, wordless, without thought-construction, quiescence which is to be realized alone, [then it is the* prajñā*] belonging to the ultimate.*[74]

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[72]Compare Mi pham's definition of the *skandha* of perception in *mKhas 'jug* I.28:"Perception consists of the grasping of distinguishing characteristics". 'du shes ni mtshan mar 'dzin pa ste/ In this sense, characteristics simply exist relatively as an interdependent component of cognition.

[73]MALV 70: don dam pa ni dngos po dang dngos po med pa dang/ skye ba dang mi skye ba dang/ stong pa dang mi stong pa la sogs pa spros pa'i dra ba mtha' dag spangs pa'o// Ichigō (1985:230-2). P. 71b.

[74]MHK, III.10-11. aśeṣa kalpanā jāla pratiṣedha vidhāyinī/ śānta pratyātna saṃvedya nirvikalpa nirakṣare/ vigataikatva nānātve tat[t]ve gagana nirmale/ apracāra pracārā ca prajñā syāt pāramārthikī/ Iida (1969:82-3).

Śāntarakṣita shares with Bhāvaviveka the view that there are levels of insight into reality, and that this key concept describes the relationship between *saṃvṛti* and *paramārtha*.[75] In verses 73-75 (translated below) Śāntarakṣita explains how the ignorance of ordinary beings prevents them from intuiting emptiness, while yogins who have purified the habit of mental construction are able to do so. He also states in verse 84 that the Buddhist path is one that leads from defilement (*saṃkleśa; nyon mongs*) to purification (*vyavadāna; byang*), implying a progressive understanding of emptiness. The culmination of the Buddhist path is non-dual gnosis, the penetrationless-penetrating wisdom (*apracāra-pracārā ca prajñā*). The gradual steps that lead to this pass, for Bhāvaviveka, through conceptual understandings of false relative truth (*mithyāsaṃvṛti*), true relative truth (*tathyāsaṃvṛti*) and the ultimate realized with effort (*paryāyaparamārtha*) until the effort-less realization of the ultimate (*aparyāyaparamārtha*) is attained.[76] For Śāntarakṣita, the path begins with relative truth, meaning true relative truth (*kun rdzob bden pa*) and passes through discursive ultimate truth (*rnam grangs pa'i don dam*) until it culminates in the non-discursive ultimate (*rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam*). Following Bhāvaviveka, Śāntarakṣita interprets the two truths according to different viewpoints rather than in terms of distinct objects of knowledge like mKhas grub.[77] And again, like Bhāvaviveka, he employs the qualification 'ultimately' (*paramārthataḥ; yang dag tu*)[78] indicating that the two truths are a matter of standpoint. It follows that the difference between the dis-cursive and non-discursive ultimate is primarily one of standpoint.

It is therefore reasonable for Mi pham to explain the concordant ultimate as a necessary soteriological step towards the non-discursive ultimate, which is the union of the two

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[75]See Iida (1973:72).
[76]See Iida (1973:64-77).
[77]The soteriological progression outlined in Table 2 (Chapter V) is also relevant here.
[78]MHK III.22a-b; MAL 1 and 69.

truths. He describes the process as follows:

> *When one first listens and reflects, the two truths are combined in such a way that production on the relative level and non-production on the ultimate level are the objects of words and concepts. This is the 'discursive ultimate' because it is contrasted with existence on the relative level. One can also say that it is [the discursive ultimate] because it is considered to count as the ultimate. This is because it is a counterpart of the relative in the so-called two truths. It is only a gateway to the definitive ultimate and is merely concordant with it. If one becomes habituated to it, it is able to destroy one's powerful clinging to the reality of things, which has been [built up] through the force of beginningless habits. It is from this point of view that it should be understood that [the Svātantrikas] make assertions saying that things are not produced. However, even if such investigation is brought to its ultimate reach, it can only bring certainty in post-meditation.*[79]

In this passage, Mi pham clarifies the relationship between the relative and the concordant ultimate in Śāntarakṣita's school. When one first begins to listen and reflect on the two truths, one's understanding of them is based on their respective definitions as opposites: relative truth is the domain of causal production, while ultimate truth is characterized by non-production. This corresponds to the Buddhist process of reasoning by negation: establishing the concept of emptiness as a non-affirming negative by refuting existence, causality and so forth. So at this stage, non-production (or dependent origination) is ultimate because it is contrasted with the relative and defined in contradistinction to it. So, says Mi pham, although this ultimate is not the definitive non-conceptual ultimate, at this stage it counts as the ultimate. It is an approximate ultimate, the nearest one can get to understanding the ultimate. Subsequently, by virtue of listening, reflecting and meditating on the two truths again and again, all clinging to the concept of existence is gradually

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[79]V. p.36-37. de ltar dang por thos bsam gyi sgra rtog gi yul du gyur pa'i tha snyad du skye ba dang/ don dam par mi skye ba lta bu tshul gnyis zung du bzhag pa'i ya gyal rnam grangs pa'i don dam ni/ kun rdzob yod pa'i zla la sbyar ba'i cig shos kyi zlas drangs pa'i phyir ram/ don dam pa'i grangs su gtogs pas na rnam grangs te/ bden pa gnyis shes pa'i kun rdzob kyi zlar bgrang rgyu de yin la/ de ni don dam mthar thug dang mthun pa'i sgo tsam mam/ de goms pas thog med nas goms pa'i bag chags kyi mthu brtas pa'i dngos por 'dzin pa gzhom nus pa'i phyir na don dam yang yin la/ de'i ngo la ltos na skye ba med ces pa'i khas len yang yod par shes par bya'o/ de'i dpyad pa tshad du phyin kyang rjes thob kyi nges pa skye tshul tsam yin no/

eliminated, implying that one comes closer to intuiting emptiness. And yet even so, according to Mi pham the method of reasoning and using non-affirmative negations only brings about certainty in one's mind during the post-meditation period. The implication is therefore that for confidence to arise during meditative equipoise, something else is needed, but what this might be remains a mystery as far as the MAL itself is concerned.[80] But the point here is that the assertions made by Svātantrikas such as Śāntarakṣita are made in concordant ultimate truth, and do not contradict the definitive ultimate or act as a substitute for it.

So if Mi pham is right, doctrinal statements made by Svātantikas, asserting for example the non-inherent existence of things or the truth of dependent origination, are made for the benefit of those on the path who have not yet realized the non-discursive ultimate. In other words, in Mahāyāna terminology, they are a skilful means (*upāya*). Mi pham goes further, and claims that they are skilful means that ensure that one goes beyond all four extremes of existence, non-existence, both and neither, and not solely the concept of existence as mKhas grub's approach is in danger of doing.

> *It is through simply the discursive ultimate that clinging to existence is, as a first step, destroyed. Later, through showing the non-discursive ultimate, clinging to non-existence is also halted. In brief, this means that without predicating true existence etc. of the four extremes of existence, non-existence, both and neither,*

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[80]Given that Mi pham was not only a Mādhyamika but also a follower of Vajrayāna and rDzogs chen, the extra element required for this supreme confidence to grow could come from Tantric initiation, devotion or the blessing of the spiritual master. But if we limit ourselves to the Madhyamaka context of the MAL, even though the text may lay down theoretical foundations that are compatible with Vajrayāna and rDzogs chen, it does not itself venture into these domains. This may be a general limitation inherent to Madyamaka, in that Madhyamaka alone cannot account for the total leap between the conceptual and non-conceptual. From the rDzogs chen point of view, Madhyamaka is still very much concerned with the conceptual insofar as it uses discursive language to communicate. As Dudjom Rinpoche (1991:295) writes, "all these sequences, from Anuyoga downwards, are exclusively spiritual and philosophical systems contacted through the intellect. All of them, on the surface of the intellect, produce such thoughts as 'this is non-existent, this empty, and this is true'. Apart from this and their convictions and their boasting through ideas and scrutiny that reality lies within the subject-object dichotomy, they do not perceive the abiding nature of the natural state, just as it is." In order to be fully coherent with the principle that ultimate truth is beyond discursive thought, rDzogs chen employs non-discursive modes of communication, namely the 'mind transmission of the buddhas' (*rgyal ba dgongs brgyud*) and the 'symbolic transmission of the knowledge-holders (*rig 'dzin brda brgyud*) (Tulku Thondup,1996:18-22). With this in mind, Mi pham's prediliction for the concordant ultimate may be no coincidence, in that all Buddhist discourse including that of Madhyamaka pertains to it leaving open the possibility for the highest ultimate to be accessed through rDzogs chen.

> *all such conceptual targets collapse and the great freedom from elaboration, the profound meaning to be realized by all-discerning wisdom, is easily recognized. There is [therefore] a need for [the concordant ultimate].*[81]

In accordance with Dudjom Rinpoche's framework of the Two Truths in Outer Madhyamaka and Great Madhyamaka, rNying ma pas consider assertions of concordant ultimate truth to be made from the standpoint of the wisdom that prevails in post-meditation, in a practitioner of Outer Madhyamaka who realizes the non-discursive ultimate during meditational equipoise.

So why is it that Prāsaṅgikas such as Candrakīrti do not approach the two truths in the same way? Mi pham[82] argues that it is because Candrakīrti's standpoint is that which pertains in meditational equipoise where the Two Truths are but one truth; and he therefore uses only ultimate reasoning—the equivalent of the reasoning that corresponds to Dudjom Rinpoche's category of post-meditation in Great Madhyamaka, when appearances are just that. Śāntarakṣita, on the other hand, emphasizes the view of the discursive ultimate in post-meditation (in Outer Madhyamaka), where the two truths are held to be different, and accordingly employs relative reasoning to account for the relative level and ultimate reasoning to account for the ultimate. Yet even for Śāntarakṣita, the non-discursive ultimate, though not emphasized, is identical with Candrakīrti's ultimate. It is important to differentiate these two occasions of *mnyam bzhag* and *rjes thob* otherwise when a yogi discusses the path and fruit, he would have to adjust his position in dependence on the views of ordinary people and this would be very strange.[83] This must mean that assertions of Buddhist doctrine (as opposed to relative assertions on mundane causality and so on)

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[81]V.p.61. des na dang por rnam grangs tsam don dam pa 'dis dngos zhen bshig nas/ de'i rjes su rnam grangs min pa'i don dam bstan pa'i dngos med la der zhen gyi cha'ang bkag ste/ mdor na yod pa dang/ med pa dang/ gnyis yin dang/ gnyis min gyi mtha' bzhi ka la bden grub sogs kyi khyad par ga nga yang ma sbyar bar de dag gi dmigs gtad zhig pa'i spros bral chen po so so rang gis rig par bya ba'i don zab mo bde blag du ngos zin pa'i dgos pa yod do/ This point is a subject of intense debate between Tibetan schools, and merits comparative study.

[82]V.pp.41-43.

are what are classified as the concordant ultimate. If this is how the concordant ultimate is defined, then it is reasonable for Mi pham to assert that the Prāsaṅgikas also use it, since they make assertions on the path and fruit. But the Prāsaṅgika viewpoint is that of Great Madhyamaka, while the Svātantrika viewpoint is that of Outer Madhyamaka. So in summary, we could say that Śāntarakṣita's approach to the Two Truths is in fact quite orthodox if one understands it as Mi pham does. The conclusion is that there is no significant or structural doctrinal difference between Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika.

We might want to add to Mi pham's comments that one of the interesting aspects of the principle of the concordant ultimate is that it effectively makes the entire theory of the two truths possible. It is not just soteriologically necessary but philosophically necessary. The relative can only be defined and characterized as such from a non-relative point of view—it is only 'relative' to the ultimate, so to speak. That is surely the point—from a strictly relative and empirical point of view, the relative world is absolute! So Buddhists need to account for the way such a distinction comes about. The concordant ultimate is the solution; it is from this standpoint that the two truths are distinguished, and it is from this standpoint that the wisdom gained through meditation informs the way one views the empirical world. It is only in the light of such wisdom that one can call it 'relative' or 'all-concealing' (*kun rdzob*). In fact, it is only by virtue of the concordant ultimate that Buddhists can say anything at all about their doctrine. Śāntarakṣita's approach has the advantage of distinguishing categories of ultimate that it is philosophically useful to separate.

So what of the non-discursive ultimate itself? If the use of non-affirming negations is not sufficient to bring us to a realization of the definitive ultimate, then how do we attain

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[83]V.p.45. gzhan rnal 'byor pa rang gi lam dang 'bras bu' rnam gzhag 'zog tshe/ tha mal pa gzhan gyi blo la [illegible] ltos 'cha' dgos pa mthsar ro/

it? How do we pass from the discursive ultimate to non-dual gnosis? Śāntarakṣita outlines the process in verses 73-75.

> **[73] If the nature of entities can be realized directly by understanding them [conceptually], why is it that uneducated people do not understand the nature of entities in this way?**
> *'o na de ni rtogs gyur pas// de yi rang bzhin mngon sum phyir//*
> *mi mkhas rnams kyang dngos rnams kyi// dngos po 'di 'dra cis mi rtogs//*
>
> **[74] [Yet] they do not. They cannot realize directly because every sentient being is subject to [the habit of] imagining things as real, which from beginningless time exists in each burdensome individual series.**
> *ma yin thog med rgyud ci bar// dngos por sgro btags dbang byas pas//*
> *de phyir srog chags thams cad kyis// mgnon sum rtogs par mi 'gyur ro//*
>
> **[75] Powerful yogins realize [the ultimate] directly and clearly [because] they have cut off [the habit of] imagining. Since logical arguments produce understanding those who use inference understand.**
> *de la sgro btags gcog byed pa// shes par byed pa'i gtan tshigs kyis//*
> *rjes su dpogs rnams shes par byed// rnal 'byor dbang rnams mngon sum gsal//*

Mi pham glosses these verses by saying that owing to our habit of superimposing concepts of existence and entityness on to what we perceive, we are incapable of ascertaining things just as they are. It is therefore absolutely necessary to go through the path of purification in order to do so. The process involves the following.

> ***Cutting through** or dispelling mistaken concepts regarding the nature of entities, **the above explained logical arguments** on the lack of unitariness and multiplicity produce an unmistaken understanding of what in fact is the nature of entities. Having [gained wisdom from] listening in this way, those who are on [the paths of] accumulation and joining learn such arguments and **make inferences** by means of that wisdom which correctly contemplates their meaning. They will hence understand, in the manner of an object universal, the emptiness which is the nature of [all] entities. **Powerful yogis** who have gained full familiarity with such a meaning reach [the path of] seeing through the eye of unerring primordial wisdom* (ye shes). *They hence **perceive directly** and **clearly** how the final nature of all phenomena is equality.*
>
> *It is in relation to this that on the first* bhūmi *one directly sees the equality [of all things] by means of supramundane primordial wisdom. Then the vivid visions of the* dharmadhātu *increasingly unfold, and when finally the natural state* (gnas

lugs) *is perfectly evidenced exactly as it is, that is the level of the* Tathāgata. *The primordial wisdom which has arisen from meditative equipoise, such as that which realizes the equality of all phenomena, is utterly free from the stains of conceptual thoughts* (rnam rtog). *It comprehends how those external and internal entities which are delightful when not examined all lack any core just like the trunk of a banana tree, and therefore no seed of [such] superimposition will arise. (...) On the basis of this, when seeing how existence has absolutely no essence, one will leave what is not transcendental, namely this shore, this world of cyclic existence, and having so discarded cyclic existence one will reach the other shore, the transcendence of suffering.*[84]

IX.3 Conclusion

The passage from conceptual understanding to non-conceptual wisdom is achieved by combining listening, reflection, reasoning and meditation. This religious praxis which underpins Buddhism effectively opens up epistemological and metaphysical possibilities that are beyond the reach of Western philosophy as currently conceived, since its domain is restricted to what is knowable/possible/logical for what, in Buddhist terms, is the deluded conceptual human mind. It provides an account of how it is possible to know things just as they are, and offers a structured explanation of why it is feasible to talk of levels of truth. Significantly, discursive language is held to be adequate to the task of *talking about* and *pointing to* non-discursive reality. If this were not the case doctrinal discourse (in any religion) would be philosophically impossible and empirically in-

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[84]C. p.385-6. dngos po'i rang bzhin **de la** phyin ci log tu sgra **btags** pa **gcod** pa'am sel bar **byed pa** dang dngos po'i rang bzhin nyid ma nor bar **shes par byed pa'i gtan tshigs** gcig dang du bral gong du ji skad bshad pa de lta bu thos nas de dag gi don tshul bzhin bsam pa'i shes rab **kyis rjes su dpogs** par byed pa'i tshogs sbyor ba **rnams** kyis dngos po'i rang bzhin stong pa nyid don spyi'i tshul du **shes par byed** la de'i don la rab tu goms pa'i **rnal 'byor gyi dbang** po **rnams** kyis phyin ci ma log pa'i ye shes gyi spyan kyis chos thams cad rang bzhin mthar thug pa mnyam pa nyid du **mngon sum du gsal** por gzigs pa yin te/ de'ang 'jig rten las 'das pa'i ye shes kyis mnyam pa nyid mngon sum du mthong pa sa dang po/ de nas chos kyi dbyings la gsal snang je cher mched de/ mthar gnas lugs je lta ba bzhin rjogs par mngon du gyur pa ni de bzhin gshegs pa nyid do/ de ltar yang chos thams cad mnyam nyid di rnam par 'byed pa'i teng nge 'dzin la sogs pa las byung ba'i ye shes gang zhig rnam rtog gi dri ma dang bral ba nyid kyis/ phyi nang gi dngos po ma brtags nyams dga' ba snying po med pa chung shing gi stong po ltar thams cad ji ltar sgro btags pa'i sa bon yang mi skye ba de ltar thugs su chud de/
C. p.387. med nas ma mthong ba yin pa ltar srid pa la'ang snying po gtan nas med par mthong na pha rol min pa'am tshu rol 'khor ba'i 'jig rten 'di'i pha rol myang 'das la son te 'khor ba 'dor zhes so/

effective. For Buddhists this cannot be the case, since they hold that Buddha's discourse did hold soteriological power.

There are many philosophical problems inherent in the Madhyamaka principle of the Two Truths. If they refer to distinct kinds of objects of knowledge, such as appearances and emptiness, are these apprehended simultaneously or separately? And if every phenomenon is characterized by both appearance and emptiness, what is the relation between the two? Does it make sense to talk of 'objects' of knowledge in ultimate truth other than in metaphorical terms? And if the relative is defined, evaluated and described from a 'higher' point of view, how relative is it? Śāntarakṣita offers what we would argue is a cogent and successful solution to these questions. The distinction between the two truths can only be made when the mind is in a mode that is capable of differentiation. This means that the distinction is not made from the ultimate point of view, when the mind simply abides without elaboration in a state of equipoise. It is in post-meditation, when the mind re-engages with appearances, that two objects of knowledge are distinguished: appearances, constituting the domain of the relative, and emptiness as the nature of those appearances, constituting the domain of the ultimate.[85] In order to benefit beings on the path of liberation, production is asserted of the former and non-production of the latter. It is only in the state of meditation itself, in the state of supreme even-mindedness, that one sees how both of these are non-contradictory in the great equalness of all things (Conze, 1953:128-129). It is then that one realizes that both emptiness and appearances are the nature and display of mind itself.

We can summarise the Yogācāra-Svātantrika stance by saying that Śāntarakṣita

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[85]Ironically, Mi pham's interpretation of Madhyamaka connects with the dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgika assertion that the two truths refer to different objects of knowledge, emptiness and appearances. The distinction made between the two truths in post-meditation according to these rNying ma pas is also based on an

emphasizes the *difference* between the two truths in the case of beginners, while the profound *union* of the two truths is not realized until one becomes an advanced yogi.

Mi pham's theory of *pramāṇa* is based on the same framework, in that he posits two distinct types of logic, each with their own domain of application: logic establishing the relative and logic establishing the ultimate. By contrast, Prāsaṅgikas emphasize the union of the two truths from the outset, and Candrakīrti's attack on the use of logic in the Madhyamaka context should be understood specifically as an attack on the use of logic to establish the relative (*tha snyad tshad ma*).

This approach to the Two Truths is a good example of the influence that Śāntarakṣita's MAL has had on the development of rNying ma doctrine. We have seen that Mi pham's system of *pramāṇa* is based upon it. And after Mi pham, another rNying ma pa named mDo sngags bstan pa'i nyi ma attempted to delineate a rNying ma position on issues of Buddhist philosophy that had been debated over the centuries by the gSar ma traditions.[86] His system, too, is based on the Svātantrika distinction between relative and ultimate types of valid cognition. One point of interest that we will note here is that mDo sngags bstan pa'i nyi ma criticises Tsong kha pa's definition of what is to be negated (*dgag bya*). Tsong kha pa and dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgikas following him consider that what is to be negated by the non-implicative negation establishing *śūnyatā*, is the essence or true existence (*bden grub*) of entities, and not particular entities *per se*. Lipman explains:

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apprehension of emptiness and appearances as being distinct. However, rNying ma pas would not call these 'objects of knowledge' existents in the deGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgika sense.

[86]'What is Buddhist Logic? Some Tibetan Developments of *Pramāṇa* Theory' by Kennard Lipman, (1992: 27). Kennard Lipman has analysed and translated part of the *lTa grub shan 'byed* by mDo sngags bstan pa'i nyi ma who was a student of Kun bzang dpal ldan, who was himself a student of Mi pham. His work built on that of Mi pham, kLong chen pa and Lo chen Dharmaśrī. He divides each of the relative and ultimate types of logic into two, making four categories in all: for the relative (*tha snyad dpyod byed pa'i tshad ma*) one is based on impure perception and the other based on pure perception, while for the ultimate (*don dam dpyod byed pa'i tshad ma*) one is discursive and the other is not. He asserts that Svātantrikas properly employ the discursive ultimate type of reasoning (*don dam rnam grangs dpyod byed pa'i tshad ma*), and accuses dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgikas of converting the non-discursive ultimate type of reasoning (*don dam rnam grangs min par dpyod byed pa'i tshad ma*) into the discursive type, resulting in their undertanding of *śūnyatā* as a non-affirming negation (*med dgag; prasajya pratiṣedha*).

> *bsTan pa'i nyi ma's critique of this distinction is that if, at the level of a critique from the ultimate point of view, we already know entities per se as conventionally existing in the manner of apparitions etc., then we would not in this case be led to assert some ultimate truth-status founded on these entities. Thus, the refutation of such a status would be redundant.*[87]

This critique pinpoints a difficulty that is inherent in the framework of the Two Truths (unless, possibly, one makes the sorts of distinctions that are made by Mi pham and his successors). And that is, that if one does not maintain a distinction between the Two Truths, and posit two types of logic respectively applying to each, then it does not make sense to negate the true existence of phenomena when such phenomena are already understood to be mere appearances in ultimate truth. Furthermore, we can add to this that it is not coherent to deny a distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual ultimates, when non-affirming negations along with all the related Madhyamaka terminology are the conceptual creations of philosophers.

What the sources cited here do not say is that Śāntarakṣita's assertion of two types of ultimate is the only way that one can find the Two Truths of Madhyamaka philosophy to be coherent. Madhyamaka is inherently flawed in the sense that it is based on logic, reasoning and the use of discursive thought, despite the fact that it insists that the ultimate truth is non-discursive and cannot be put into words. Whether Prāsaṅgikas explicitly admit a concordant ultimate or not, they are bound to use discourse to refute their opponents. This means that the method of Madhyamaka is not in accord with its goal. It relies on the conceptual mind in order to reach the non-conceptual mind, and the precise link between these two is tenuous. The approach of rNying ma pas, based on Śāntarakṣita, has the advantage of leaving the highest non-discursive ultimate as a domain which can be accessed in part through Madhyamaka, and in part through the non-discursive methods of Vajrayāna and rDzogs chen.

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[87]Lipman (1992:35).

CHAPTER TEN A THIRD CHARIOT WAY?

X.1 Characterizing Śāntarakṣita's thought

During the course of this study, we have seen that many of the definitional features ascribed to the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka school by dGe lugs pa doxographers (in particular dKon mchog 'jig med dbang po and lCang skya) do not apply to Śāntarakṣita's thought. A number of the disputed criteria do indeed apply to Sautrāntika-Svātantrikas like Bhāvaviveka. Whether they also apply to other Yogācāra-Svātantrikas such as Kamalaśīla and Haribhadra is a matter for further research. But in the case of Śāntarakṣita himself who, after all, is considered the scholar who established the philosophical tenets of this school as a coherent system, if we view his thought through these dGe lugs pa eyes it has many weaknesses and inconsistencies. On the other hand, if we interpret it according to Mi pham's perspective, it does not. The MAL then emerges as a coherent philosophical system that is remarkable in the way it brings together Yogācāra and Madhyamaka streams of Mahāyāna thought, and also in the way that it presents a view that allows the option for Vajrayāna or rDzogs chen elaboration.

First, let us summarise the key points on which Mi pham disagrees with dGe lugs pa critics, which will yield the initial stage of our understanding of Śāntarakṣita's philosophy —with reference to what it is not. The numbers in brackets refer to sections of this study.

i) The logical grounds for classifying Śāntarakṣita as a Svātantrika are inconclusive. Whether he uses the *ekānekaviyogahetu* as a *svatantra prayoga* or a *prasaṅga* argument is an open question. (V.2) This ambiguity is probably due to the fact that in his own time these two logical forms had not yet been clearly distinguished or their philosophical implications explored.

In addition, owing to Śāntarakṣita espousal of ascending scales of analysis (following Dharmakīrti), it is clear that the subject (*dharmin*) of his arguments is not always commonly accepted both by him and his opponent. (VIII.5.1) The use of autonomous syllogisms cannot therefore be asserted as a necessary element of Śāntarakṣita's approach, either on the logical or the soteriological level.

ii) Svātantrika is characterized by the view that the distinction between the self of persons (*pudgalanairātmya*) and the self of phenomena (*dharmanairātmya*) is based on *how* they are selfless (their relative subtlety) not on that which is selfless which is the Prāsaṅgika view. But for Śāntarakṣita there is no difference in subtlety, and the distinction between the two selflessnesses is made in terms of the basis to which emptiness is applied. (V.7) His position is explained in the light of the Tibetan distinction between innate ignorance (*ma rig pa lhan skyes*) and the ignorance of imputation (*ma rig pa'i kun brtags*), not Bhāvaviveka's distinction between afflictive obscurations (*kleśavaraṇa*) and obscurations to knowledge (*jñeyāvaraṇa*). Thus the two selflessnesses are realized simultaneously, first based on the ignorance of imputation, and second based on innate ignorance. It is argued that this is why the MAL does not refute the self of persons separately.

iii) That Śāntarakṣita accepts *svasaṃvedana* is uncontroversial but there is disagreement on what he means by this, and what the status of *svasaṃvedana* is. (VIII.3.1) The MAL explicitly refers to *reflexive* awareness (Matilal's terminology), i.e. the definition of consciousness as being self-aware as opposed to matter defined as not self-aware; and rejects *svasaṃvedana* as

reflective awareness being the awareness that an awareness has arisen in the mind. The dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgika refutation of *svasaṃvedana* is made at cross purposes with regard to Śāntarakṣita since it rejects reflective awareness. Śāntarakṣita asserts the reflexivity of mind only conventionally, without metaphysical entailment.

iv) dKon mchog 'jig med dbang po asserts that Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka accepts six consciousnesses, whereas Mi pham claims that Śāntarakṣita accepts eight consciousnesses on the grounds that he accepts the Cittamātra model of cognition in relative truth. (VIII.3.3) However, he admits the *ālaya* only in the role of storehouse consciousness for karmic seeds. (We hold that this is one of Mi pham's weakest arguments. He argues for *ālaya* on the grounds that Śāntarakṣita must accept Cittamātra comprehensively in relative truth, and yet ignores all the other roles ascribed to the *ālaya* by Asaṅga implying that Śāntarakṣita's acceptance of Cittamātra is *not* comprehensive.)

v) Unlike some dGe lugs pa exegetes who consider that Śāntarakṣita accepts the Non-Pluralist view in epistemology, Mi pham argues that he is an Equalist. (VIII.4.1) The cognizing consciousness must correspond to the object of cognition, so the former cannot be single and the latter plural. The Equalist position is tenable if, and only if, one admits the possibility for several cognitions to occur simultaneously, provided they are not conflicting opposites.

vi) Svātantrikas are defined by dGe lugs pas such as lCang skya as those Mādhyamikas who assert that the subject (*dharmin*) of a proposition appears to non-erroneous cognition (*pramāṇa*) meaning a non-defective

sense consciousness. (VIII.5.1) However, insofar as Śāntarakṣita follows the internalist analysis of Cittamātra, he does not hold perception to be non-erroneous since things do not exist as they appear (they pertain to the *parikalpita svabhāva*). The way we perceive arises from ignorance and karmic latencies.

vii) Refutations of Śāntarakṣita's approach to the Two Truths by dGe lugs pas such as mKhas grub are carried out at cross purposes, since their respective understandings of *śūnyatā* are different. (IX.1) For Śāntarakṣita, the Two Truths are differentiated not solely as objects of knowledge but also in relation to the state of mind of the perceiver. (IX.1.2) Furthermore, *śūnyatā* is not simply a non-affirming negative but a realization that is beyond logic and discursive thought.

viii) Finally, dGe lugs pa doxographers claim that relative truth in Svātantrika includes the existence of things by way of their characteristics. (V.6 and IX.2.2) But on the internalist analysis made by Śāntarakṣita the existenceof external objects is refuted and all phenomena are mind only. Appearances are accepted only in relative truth, with no entailments for ultimate truth, that is, for true existence. To assert otherwise is to confuse relative and ultimate truths.

It follows from this analysis that Śāntarakṣita's viewpoint is not radically different from that which is usually classified as Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka. This statement is consistent with the fact that Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika had not been identified as two distinct systems of Madhyamaka in Śāntarakṣita's day, so he would not have had the intention to demarcate his position clearly in these terms. (III.4.2) This does not mean that Śāntarak-

ṣita should now, with hindsight, be classified as a Prāsaṅgika instead. Mi pham certainly considers him to be a Svātantrika in the sense that his standpoint emphasizes the value and perspective of the conceptual ultimate (*rnam grangs pa'i don dam*), by contrast to the Prāsaṅgika emphasis on the non-conceptual ultimate (*rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam*). (I.2) Thus the Prāsaṅgika school of Madhyamaka is held to be the higher. In conclusion, then, the point of contention concerns what is respectively understood to be Prāsaṅgika- and Svātantrika-Madhyamaka by rNying ma and dGe lugs schools.

IX.2 How Śāntarakṣita brings together Yogācāra and Madhyamaka

If we take Yogācāra to include both the psychological and metaphysical tradition of Asaṅga, and the logical and epistemological tradition of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita incorporates both these streams of Yogācāra into Madhyamaka.

He adopts Asaṅga's framework of the stages of a gradual path to awakening by giving the MAL a phased soteriological structure. (Table 2) Although the MAL presents the basis or ground (*gzhi*) of Śāntarakṣita's view rather than the path (*lam*) of liberating practice, according to Śākya mChog ldan and Kajiyama, it nevertheless presents a staged progression of philosophical views, adopting first Sautrāntika and then Cittamātra in relative truth, and Madhyamaka in ultimate truth. (V.5) Since Nāgārjuna explored the ground (*gzhi*) of Mahāyāna and Asaṅga developed its path (*lam*), Śāntarakṣita takes the further step of presenting a soteriologically phased approach to his understanding of the ground, thus combining both Madhyamaka and Yogācāra strengths and finding a new formulation of Mahāyāna in the process.

Śāntarakṣita himself defines his synthesis as one that accepts Cittamātra in relative truth

and Madhyamaka in ultimate truth. (MAL 92) Yet because the relative can only be defined in relation to the ultimate and *vice versa*, this characterization is more complex than it appears. For example, Śāntarakṣita does not use his refutation of external objects to establish an immaterialist form of idealism. He accepts both matter and mind in relative truth (MAL 16) and therefore accepts that in relative truth there is a perceptual given. (VII.3.2) Although he adopts many features of the Cittamātra model of cognition he does not accept them all: he accepts *svasaṃvedana* and may accept *ālaya*, but makes no mention of *tathāgatagarbha*. And although he acknowledges that the Cittamātra Sākāravādin view is the most acceptable in relative truth, he re-interprets this in the light of Madhyamaka so that aspects (*ākāra; rnam pa*) arise through interdependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*). Similarly, he re-interprets Cittamātra metaphysics in the light of Madhyamaka: when he accepts causal efficiency as a characteristic of the relative (MAL 64), he interprets causality as interdependent origination. (IX.2.2)

In addition, whilst Śāntarakṣita adopts the syllogistic methods of the logicians he clearly situates all logical argument and rational discourse within the Madhyamaka framework of the Two Truths. (MAL 70) Logic can either pertain to the relative (since for Śāntarakṣita this refers exclusively to the true relative understood through *pramāṇa*) or the conceptual ultimate, for example in the case of Dharma. That is to say that language itself never pertains to the highest ultimate. Accordingly, and in the light of other points raised above, his use of reasoning does not entail any of the unwanted consequences identified by dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgikas, such as accepting the independent existence of the *dharmin* or the ultimate validity of *all* logical methods. (V.1: Tillemans, 1982)

The way Śāntarakṣita has developed his synthesis of Yogācāra and Madhyamaka presents

us with a complex blending of the two that avoids the potential contradictions arising from their differences. His synthesis succeeds in bringing to light that which is common to both, and proves that it is possible to view them not simply as compatible but as complementary.

X.3 Does the MAL initiate a third chariot way?

Mi pham's commentary on the MAL is famous for having asserted that by combining Yogācāra and Madhyamaka in the way he has, Śāntarakṣita founded a third chariot way (*shing rta*). (II.4.7) Buddhist historians agree that the first two were promulgated by Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga respectively, but Mi pham's claim about Śāntarakṣita is controversial. In order to assess it, one must consider how a chariot way is defined by the tradition. In a recent text by the rNying ma mKhan po brTson 'grus, we find a discussion of this specific issue.[1]

> *The founders of the commentarial traditions of the Prajñāpāramitā are certainly two in number: 1) Nāgārjuna, who elucidated the stages of emptiness, the direct teaching of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras; and 2) Maitreya, who elucidated the hidden meaning, the stages of manifest realization.*
>
> *Generally, it is said that the founder of the tradition of the Profound Madhyamaka is Ārya Nāgārjuna, and the founder of the tradition of Vast Conduct is the noble Asaṅga. In addition to these two, the Lord of Dharma Mi pham rin po che, who was Mañjuśrī in actuality, in his commentary to the* Madhyamakālaṃkāra, *names the great mKhan po Śāntarakṣita as the founder of the tradition that united the Profound and the Vast. However, since these are the founders of the general traditions of the Mahāyāna, they should not be confused with the topic presently under discussion.*
>
> *The significance of the word 'founder' or 'charioteer' is that having been accepted directly as a favourite son of the Victorious Ones by Maitreya or Mañjuśrī, one comments on the intent of the Victorious Ones independently, without relying upon any text of human authorship.*

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[1]The following is taken from an unpublished translation by Adam Pearcey of a work by rDzogs chen mKhan po brTson 'grus entitled "A Preliminary to the Explanation of the *Prajñāpāramitā*: The Founders of the Tradition, the Explanatory Sūtras, Ways of Commenting, and so forth" *(Sher phyin 'chad pa'i sngon 'gro),* Ngagyur Nyingma Institute, Mysore, South India. *Shing rta* is translated here as 'founder'.

The main point seems to be that chariot ways do not rely on any other human author. And therefore, since Śāntarakṣita's Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis relies on philosophical treatises composed by humans before him, as well as on the works of two previous 'charioteers', he cannot be defined as a charioteer himself. What he wrote was not radically new, it was based on pre-existing doctrines. Mi pham's claim is dismissed on the strength of such a definition. And indeed, in the light of all the evidence gathered in the present study, we have found that it is the case that the MAL is based on works and on developments in philosophical thought that pre-dated Śāntarakṣita by several centuries. His genius was not to invent a radically new Buddhist doctrine, but to bring together different aspects of the Buddhist doctrine in a brilliant new synthesis.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

MI PHAM'S TOPICAL OUTLINE *(sa bcad)* elucidating the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*

Page numbers refer to the Chengdu edition (Text A) and to the Varanasi edition (Text B) respectively

BSHAD BYA DNGOS BSHAD PA	Text A Page	Text B Page
PART I - gzhung don rnam par dbye ba dngos		
1. ***mtshan don:*** dbu ma rgyen gyi rnam bshad 'jam dbyang bla ma dgyes pa'i zhal lung	118	86
2. ***'gyur phyag***	123	90
3. ***gzhung don***	124	91
1. SHES BYA BDEN GNYIS KYI TSHUL GTAN LA DBAB PA		
A. bden gnyis kyi tshul ngos gzung[1] ba		
1. don dam par dngos po med par bstan pa	125	91
a) tsa ba'i rtags 'god pa	125	91
b) de'i tshul sgrub pa	139	104
i) phyogs chos sgrub pa	139	104
(1) bden pa'i gcig bral sgrub pa	139	104
1. khyab pa'i gcig dgag pa	139	104
(1) khyab byed bye brag pa gcig bden dgag pa	140	104
(a) rtags dngos gcig bden dgag		
i. gzhan sdes btags pa'i rtag dngos dgag	140	104
ii. rang sdes btags pa'i rtag dngos dgag pa	146	109
A. 'gog byed kyi rigs pa mdor bstan pa	147	109
B. de'i tshul rgyas par bshad pa	149	112
(i) shes pa snga ma'i yul phyi'i ma'i rjes su 'brang na mi 'thad pa	150	112
(ii) rjes su mi 'brang na mi 'thad pa	161	122
+ yul 'dus ma byas skad cig mar thal ba	161	122
+ de ltar khas len na skyon bstan pa	162	123
(a) rkyen la ltos na 'dus byas su thal ba	163	123
(b) mi ltos na rtag tu yod pa'am med par thal ba	163	124

[1]The spelling in the Chengdu edition is given as *bzung ba*, while that in the Varanasi edition is *gzung ba*. It seems that the Varanasi edition is correct.

EXPLAINING THE SUBJECT OF THE TEXT

PART I - The subject that is to be thoroughly established: the meaning of the text

1. ***Meaning of the title:*** An exposition on the treatise [entitled] "The Ornament of the Middle Way", the words [of which] will delight the lama [who is like] Mañjuśrī
2. ***Homage*** [by Mi pham]
3. ***Meaning of the [main] text***

Stanza

1. ESTABLISHING THE BASIS OF WHAT IS TO BE KNOWN: THE WAY [OF DISTINGUISHING] THE TWO TRUTHS

A. Mastering the correct way [to distinguish] the Two Truths

1. Showing that entities do not exist on the ultimate level

a) Presenting the main argument 1

b) Proving [the validity of] this approach

i) Proving this Buddhist view

(1) Proving that entities with a unitary nature do not truly exist

1. Refuting the true existence of unitary pervasive entities

(1) Refuting the true existence of particular unitary pervasive entities

(a) Permanent unitary entities

i. Refuting permanent [unitary] entities presented by non-Buddhists 2

ii. Permanent [unitary] entities presented by certain Buddhists

A. Brief presentation of the argument that refutes [them] 3

B. Detailed explanation of the refutation

(i) The object of the first moment of consciousness cannot be identical with that of the subsequent moment 4

(ii) [The object of the first moment of consciousness] cannot be different from that of the second moment

+ The unconditioned object occurs in successive moments 5

+ Showing the faults [arising] from acceptance of this [view]

(a) If the [object's] continuation depends on conditions, it is compounded 6

(b) If it is not continuous, it is always either [truly] existent or non-existent 7

	Text A Page	Text B Page
iii. rtag dngos bkag pa'i mjug bsdu ba	166	126
(b) gang zag gcig bden dgag pa	170	129
(2) khyab byed kyi spyi gcig bden dgag pa	176	135
2. ma khyab pa'i gcig bden dgag pa	178	137
(i) phyi rol gcig bden dgag	179	137
a. rags pa gcig bden dgag pa	179	137
b. rdul phran gcig bden dgag pa	180	139
(1) rdul phran 'gog pa'i rigs pa bstan pa	181	139
* phyogs sngo'i 'dod tshul brjod pa	181	139
* de dgag pa	185	142
a) cha med na rags pa mi 'grub	185	143
b) cha yod na phra rdul du mi 'thad par bstan pa	188	145
(2) rdul phran de khegs pas dngos po du ma khegs pa	188	145
* rtags 'god pa	189	146
* khyab pa sgrub pa	189	146
(ii) shes pa gcig bden dgag pa	192	149
1. phyi don yod par 'dod pa'i lugs la shes pa gcig bden dgag pa	193	149
(1) thun min so so'i 'dod pa dgag pa	193	149
(a) rang sde don smra sde gnyis kyi lugs dgag pa	193	149
i) rnam med bye smra ba'i lugs dgag pa	193	149
A. rang rig 'thad par sgrub pa	194	149
a. rang rig gi ngo bo ngos bzung ba	194	149
b. de la rang rig tu gdags pa'i 'thad pa	205	159
B. don rig mi 'thad par bstan pa	208	163
C. rnam med pa'i lugs mi 'thad par bstan pa	211	165
a. rnam bcas pa la don myong ba'i tha snyad tsam 'thad par bstan pa	212	165
b. rnam med pa la don myong ba'i tha snyad tsam yang mi 'thad par bstan pa	212	166
ii) rnam bcas[2] mdo sde pa'i[3] lugs dgag pa	214	167

[2]The Varanasi text does not have the qualification *rnam bcas*, and speaks here only of undifferentiated Sautrāntikas.

[3]Variant spellings are noted here: *mdo sde ba'i* in the Chengdu edition, and *mdo sde pa'i* in the Varanasi edition.

iii. Summary of the refutation of [such] permanent entities 8
(b) Refuting persons as truly existent unitary [entities] 9
(2) Refuting the true existence of general unitary pervasive [entities] 10

2. Refuting the true existence of unitary non-pervasive [entities]
(i) Refuting the true existence of unitary external objects
a. Refuting the true existence of gross objects
b. Refuting the true existence of indivisible particles
(1) Presenting the argument that refutes indivisible particles
* Expressing the view of the earlier schools 11
* Refuting these [schools]
a) if there are no parts, there are no gross objects 12
b) showing that if there are parts, there are no indivisible particles 13
(2) By refuting [the existence of] indivisible particles one [also] refutes [the existence of] conditioned entities
* Presenting the argument 14
* Proving the pervasion 15

(ii) Refuting consciousness as a truly existing unitary [entity]
1. Refuting the view of a truly existing unitary consciousness [held by] traditions which assert that external objects exist
(1) Refuting the beliefs of each school in turn
(a) Refuting the view of the two Buddhist schools that assert [external] objects [exist]
i) Refuting [the Vaibhāṣikas] who hold that [objects are perceived] without aspects

A. Establishing the validity of self-awareness
a. Identifying the true essence of this self-awareness 16
b. Consequently it is valid to assert a [consciousness that is] self-aware 17

B. Showing that [the idea that] consciousness [perceives external] objects is not valid 18

C. Showing the [Vaibhāṣika] view [that perception occurs] without an aspect is not valid
a. Showing that perception of an object with an aspect is only valid in relative truth 19-20
b. Showing that it is not valid even in relative truth [to speak of] perception of an object without an aspect 21

ii) Refuting the view of the Sautrāntikas who hold that [perception] is endowed with aspects

	Text A Page	Text B Page
A. sna tshogs gnyis med pa	214	168
a. shes pa bzhin du rnams pa gcig tu thal ba[4]	214	168
b. rnam pa bzhin du shes pa du mar thal ba	216	169
c. de lta min na shes rnam tha dad du thal ba dgag pa	216	169
B. sgo nga phyed tshal ba'i lugs dgag pa	217	170
a. 'dod pa brjod pa	217	170
b. de dgag pa	219	171
i) don dgag pa	219	172
(a) yi ge la dmigs pa'i blos ma nges pa	219	172
(b) yid rtog 'ga'a zhig yul la 'jug tshul gyis ma nges pa	221	173
(c) blo thams cad kyis ma nges par bstan pa	222	174
ii) dpe dgag pa	223	175
(a) rtags 'god pa	223	175
(b) de'i khyab pa sgrub pa	224	176
* mthong dran yul 'gal bar bstan pa	224	176
* mtshams sbyor yin na gsal snang mi rigs par bstan pa	225	176
C. rnams shes grangs mnyam pa dgag pa	226	177
a. 'dod pa brjod pa	226	177
b. de dgag pa	228	179
i) blo thams cad du ma'i rnam pa can du sgrub pa	228	179
ii) cha med kyi gcig bden mi srid par bstan pa	228	179
(a) dmigs bya bem po la brtags na gcig pur dmigs pa med tshul	229	179
(b) dmigs byed blo la brtags na de med tshul	230	180
(b) phyi rol pa'i lugs dgag pa	231	181
i) rig pa can sogs kyi dgag pa spyir bstan pa	231	181
ii) bye brag tu dgag pa	236	186
A. rgyal ba dang rgyal dpogs pa'i lugs dgag pa	236	186

[4]The headings given here are those in the Chengdu table of contents. However, referring to their appearance in the body of the text (e.g. Varanasi pp.167-8), they could be read grammatically as follows: (a) shes pa bzhin du rnams pa gcig tu thal bas dgag pa; (b) rnam pa bzhin du shes pa du mar thal bas dgag pa; (c) de lta min na shes rnam tha dad du thal bas dgag pa.

A. The non-pluralists
a. The consequence that aspects would be unitary just like consciousness 22
b. The consequence that consciousness would be many just like aspects 23
c. If this is not the case, refuting the consequence that consciousness and aspects are separate [entities] 23

B. Refuting the view of the half-eggists
a. Presenting their view 24
b. Refuting this [view]
i) Refuting the meaning
(a) Uncertainty [in the case of] a mind that perceives letters 25
(b) Uncertainty [resulting] from the way of establishing unitary mental concepts concerning several objects 26
(c) Showing that this uncertainty [applies] to all perceptions 27
ii) Refutation [based on] an example
(a) Presenting the argument 28
(b) Proving the pervasion
* Showing the contradiction in [the opponent's position on] seeing and remembering an object 29
* Showing that if this is asserted, one cannot speak of 'clear perception' 30

C. Refuting the equalists
a. Presenting their view 31
b. Refuting this [view]
i) Proving that all perceptions involve several aspects 32
ii) Showing that the true existence of a unitary indivisible [moment of perception] is impossible
(a) When we analyse a perceived material object, [we find that] there cannot be a perception of something unitary 33
(b) When we analyse the mind that perceives, [we find that a unitary indivisible moment of perception] cannot exist 34

(b) Refuting the non-Buddhist schools
i) Presenting a general refutation of all these schools 35
ii) Refuting each in turn
A. Refuting the Jaina and Mīmāṁsā schools 36

	Text A Page	Text B Page
B. rgyang 'phen pa'i lugs dgag pa	243	192
C. grangs can pa'i lugs la shes pa gcig bden mi srid par bstan pa	245	194
a. dgag pa brjod pa	246	194
b. nyes spong gi lan dgag pa	249	197
D. gsang ba pa'i lugs dgag pa	250	198
(2) thun mong du mjug bsdu ba	259	206
(a) phyi rol la gcig bden du zhen pa dgag pa	259	206
(b) shes pa la gcig bden dgag pa	261	207
(c) de gnyis kyi don bsdu ba	262	208
2. phyi don mi 'dod pa rnam rig pa'i lugs dgag pa	262	209
(1) phyogs snga brjod pa	262	209
(2) tshul de la brtag[5] pa	267	213
(a) de dag gi skyon yon la brtag[6] pa	267	213
(b) skyon kyi cha rnam shes bden grub dgag pa	268	214
i) rnam bden pa'i lugs dgag pa	268	214
A. sgo nga phyed tshal ba'i lugs dgag pa	268	214
a. 'gal ba ston pa	269	214
b. 'gal spong mi nus pa'i tshul bshad pa	271	217
1. thal ba 'god pa	272	217
2. skyon de phyi don khas len pa'i rnam bcas pa la'ang mtshungs par bstan pa	273	218
B. rnam shes grangs mnyam pa'i lugs dgag pa	274	219
C. sna tshogs gnyis med pa dgag pa	277	221
a. sun 'byin gyi dam bca'a 'god pa	277	221
b. de'i 'thad pa sgrub pa	279	223
ii) rnam brdzun pa'i lugs dgag pa	280	224
1. 'dod pa brjod pa	280	224
2. de dgag pa	281	225
a. dgag pa mdor bstan	281	225
b. de'i don rgyas par bshad pa	285	228
(i) rnam pa med pa mi 'thad pa	285	228
(a) yul shes tshul la brtags na mi 'thad pa	285	228

[5]Variant spellings are noted here: *brtags pa* in the Chengdu edition for this and the following line, but *brtag pa* in the Varanasi edition in both cases.
[6]See note 2 above.

B. Refuting the Cārvāka school 37
C. Showing that a single (unitary) consciousness does not truly exist as the Sāṃkhya school claims
a. Presenting the refutation 38
b. Refuting the response of those who deny this mistake 39
D. Refuting the Advaita Vedānta school 40

(2) Summary of what has been established in relative truth
(a) Refuting the belief that external objects truly exist as unitary 41
(b) Refuting that consciousness truly exists as unitary 42
(c) Summarizing the meaning of these two [sections] 43

2. Refuting the view that perception [is] endowed with an aspect, [held by] those who do not assert [the existence of] external phenomena [i.e. Cittamātra]
(1) Explaining their view 44
(2) Analysing this approach
(a) Analysing the strengths and weaknesses [shown by] the proponents of this view 45
(b) Considering its defects and refuting that consciousness and aspects truly exist
i) Refuting the [Cittamātrin] view that aspects are truly existent
A. Refuting the view of the half-eggists
a. Exposing the contradiction 46
b. Explaining [their] inability to reject this contradiction
1. Establishing the consequences 47
2. Showing that this defect is similar to that [which one finds] in those who believe in external objects [linked to consciousness via] aspects 48
B. Refuting the view of the equalists 49
C. Refuting the non-pluralists
a. Presenting the thesis that refutes [them] 50
b. Proving the validity of this [argument] 51
ii) Refuting the [Cittamātrin] view that aspects are an illusion

1. Explaining their view 52
2. Refuting this [view]
a. Briefly presenting the refutation 53
b. Detailed explanation of the meaning of this [refutation]
(i) It is not valid [to assert] there are no aspects
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[7]Variant spelling of *spang* in the Chengdu table of contents, but *spong* is found in the body of the text in both the Chengdu and Varanasi editions.

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[8]The Varanasi edition has *kun rdzob tu rtsod spong*.
[9]Variant heading in the Varanasi edition reads: *kun rdzob don byed nus snang du khas blangs pa'i phan yon/*
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[11]This final section is not included in the Varanasi edition. It is not by Mi pham, but by rDo grub chen Rin po che, a rNying ma lama living in Sikkim, northern India.

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APPENDIX II

TIBETAN TEXT OF THE *MADHYAMAKĀLAMKĀRA*[1]
with a new English translation on facing pages

1. bdag dang gzhan smra'i dngos 'di dag// yang dag tu na gcig pa dang//
   du ma'i rang bzhin bral ba'i phyir// rang bzhin med de gzugs brnyan bzhin//

2. 'bras bu rim can nyer sbyor bas// rtag rnams gcig pu'i bdag nyid min//
   'bras bu re re tha dad na// de dag rtag las nyams par 'gyur//

3. bsgoms las byung ba'i shes pa yis// shes bya 'dus ma byas smra ba'i//
   lugs la'ang gcig min de dag ni// rim can shes dang 'brel phyir ro//

4. rnam shes snga mas shes bya ba'i// rang bzhin rjes su 'brang na ni//
   shes pa snga ma'ang phyi mar 'gyur// phyi ma'ang de bzhin snga mar 'gyur//

5. sngon dang phyi ma'i gnas rnams su// de yi ngo bo mi 'byung na//
   'dus ma byas de shes pa bzhin// skad cig 'byung bar shes par bya//

6. snga ma snga ma'i skad cig gi// mthu yis 'byungs bar 'gyur ba na//
   'dus ma byas su 'di mi 'gyur// sems dang sems las byung ba bzhin//

7. skad cig pa rnams 'di dag tu// rang dbang 'byung bar 'dod na ni//
   gzhan la bltos pa med pa'i phyir// rtag tu yod pa'am med par 'gyur//

8. don byed nus pa ma yin la// de 'dod brtags pas ci zhig bya//
   ma ning gzugs bzang mi bzang zhes// 'dod ldan rnams kyis brtags ci phan//

9. skad cig skad cig ma yin par// gang zag bstan du mi rung bas//
   gcig dang du ma'i rang bzhin dang// bral bar gsal bar rab tu shes//

10. tha dad phyogs can dang 'brel phyir// khyab rnams gcig pur ga la 'gyur//
    bsgribs dang ma bsgribs dngos sogs phyir// rags pa rnams khyang gcig pu min//

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[1] This text is based on the Peking edition. For a critical edition of the text see Ichigō (1985 and 1989).

1. Those entities asserted [as real] by ourselves [i.e. Buddhists] and others have in reality no intrinsic nature because they have neither a unitary nor a multiple nature, like a reflection.

2. Since effects are produced in succession, permanent [causes] cannot have a unitary nature. If effects [arise] at different points in time this contradicts the permanence of [the cause].

3. According to the [Vaibhāṣika] view, the unconditioned are objects of the cognition that arises through meditation; so the unconditioned are not [in fact] unitary entities since they are related to successively arising [moments of] cognition.

4. If the intrinsic nature of an [object] known by a former cognition continues to exist [in the object of a] later [cognition], the former cognition becomes the succeeding one, and the latter becomes the same as the former.

5. [On the other hand] if the essence of that [object] does not occur at all previous and subsequent occasions, it should be understood that the unconditioned is a momentary occurrence, just like a cognition.

6. If it arises by the force of successive moments, the unconditioned is not [really] unconditioned, just like mind and mental states.

7. If it is asserted that these momentary entities have arisen independently, they would remain permanently existent or non-existent, since they are not reliant on anything else.

8. [Finally,] since these propounded entities cannot perform any function, what is the point of investigating them? Lustful [women] may wonder whether a eunich is handsome or not, but what purpose will their examination serve?

9. Other than as momentary or non-momentary the person cannot be demonstrated. That its nature is neither unitary nor multiple is therefore clearly and thoroughly recognized.

10. Since they are related to that which has various directions, how can pervasives be unitary? And since gross entities are obscured, unobscured and so on, they are not unitary either.

11. 'byar ba dang ni bskor ba 'am// bar med rnam par gnas kyang rung//
dbus gnas rdul phran rdul gcig la// bltas pa'i rang bzhin gang yin pa//

12. rdul phran gzhan la blta ba yang// de nyid gal te yin brjod na//
de lta yin na de lta bu// sa chu la sogs rgyas 'gyur ram//

13. rdul phran gzhan la lta ba'i ngos// gal te gzhan du 'dod na ni//
rab tu phra rdul ji lta bur// gcig pu cha shas med par 'gyur//

14. rdul phran rang bzhin med grub pa// de phyir mig dang rdzas la sogs//
bdag dang gzhan smras mang po dag// rang bzhin med par mngon pa yin//

15. de yi rang bzhin des brtsams dang// de yi yon tan de las bdag//
de yi spyi dang khyad par yang// de dag de dang 'du ba can//

16. rnam shes bems po'i rang bzhin las// bzlog pa rab tu skye ba ste//
bems min rang bzhin gang yin pa// de 'di'i bdag nyid shes pa yin//

17. gcig pa cha med rang bzhin la// gsum gyi rang bzhin mi 'thad phyir//
de yi rang gi rig pa ni// bya dang byed pa'i dngos por min//

18. de'i phyir 'di ni shes pa yi// rang bzhin yin pas bdag shes rung//
don gyi rang bzhin gzhan dag la// de yis ji ltar shes par 'gyur//

19. de yi rang bzhin gzhan la med// gang gis de shes gzhan yang shes//
shes dang shes par bya ba'i don// tha dad par ni 'dod phyir ro//

20. shes pa rnam bcas phyogs la ni// dngos su de gnyis tha dad kyang//
de dang gzugs brnyan 'dra bas na// gdags pa tsam gyi tshor bar rung//

21. don gyi rnam pas bsgyur ldan pa'i// rnam shes su zhig mi 'dod pa//
de la phyi rol rig pa yi// rnam pa 'di yang yod ma yin//

22. shes gcig tha dad ma yin pas// rnam pa mang por mi 'gyur te//
de phyir de yi mthu yis ni// don shes 'gyur bar bzhag pa med//

23. rnam pa rnams dang ma bral bas// rnam shes gcig pur mi 'gyur ro//
de lta min na 'di gnyis la// gcig ces ji skad brjod par bya//

11, 12. Whether particles exist conjoined [with others], surrounded [by others] with intervals in-between, or immediately contiguous [with others], if it is claimed that the nature of the central particle that faces a [second] particle is the very same as the nature that faces a [third or fourth] particle, then earth, water and so on could not develop, could they?

13 If one asserts that the side facing [a second] particle is different from the side facing a [third] particle, how then can the most subtle particles be unitary and partless?

14 It has been proved that particles have no intrinsic nature. Therefore the eye, substance, and so on, and the numerous [other entities] that are postulated as real by ourselves and others, are clearly devoid of intrinsic nature [too].

15 They are compounds composed of [particles]. Moreover, the nature of these entities, their composition, their qualities and type of function, and their general and particular characteristics, [all] come from these [particles].

16 Consciousness arises as [that which is] instrinsically opposed to the nature of matter. The nature of that which is immaterial is self-awareness.

17 The self-aware nature of the mind should not be analysed into action and agent since it is unitary and without parts, and cannot be divided into three [i.e. the knower, the known and the knowing].

18 Therefore, since this is the nature of consciousness, [the mind] is able to cognize itself. But how can it cognize objects whose nature is different?

19 Its nature [i.e. that of consciousness] is not the same as that of [the object, which is] other. Since you [the opponent, i.e. the Nirākarajñānavādins) assert that cognition and the object of cognition are different [in nature], how can the mind cognize both itself and other things?

20 As for those who assert that cognition is endowed with aspects (the Sākārajñānavādins), these two [cognition and aspects] are in actuality different; yet as this is similar to [the case of] a reflection, it is acceptable merely as a designation.

21 [On the other hand], for those [i.e. the Nirākārajñānavādins] who do not accept that consciousness is transformed by the aspect of the object, there is no aspect through which it can be aware of outer objects.

22 Since a unitary consciousness does not have different [parts], it cannot have many different aspects. Therefore one cannot assert that cognition of an object takes place through the power of a unitary consciousness.

23 Consciousness should not be unitary since it is related to a plurality of aspects. Otherwise how can the identity of the two be explained?

24. dkar po dag la sogs pa la// shes pa de ni rim 'byung ste//
mgyogs par 'byung phyir blun po dag// cig car snyam du shes pa yin//

25. lcug ma'i sgra la sogs pa'i blo// rab tu mgyogs par 'byung yin na//
de phyir cig car 'byung ba'i blo// 'dir yang ci phyir 'byung mi 'gyur//

26. yid kyi rtog pa 'ba zhig la'ang// rim du shes par mi 'gyur ro//
ring du gnas pa ma yin pas// blo rnams kun kyang mgyogs 'byung 'dra//

27. de phyir yul rnams thams cad la// rim gyis 'dzin par mi 'gyur gyi//
rnam pa dag ni tha dad ltar// cig car 'dzin par snang bar 'gyur//

28. mgal me la yang cig car du// 'khor lor snang ba'i 'khrul ba 'byung//
gsal bar rab tu snang ba'i phyir// mthong ba'i mtshams sbyor ma yin no//

29. 'di ltar mtshams rnams sbyor ba ni// dran pas byed pa nyid yin gyi//
mthong bas ma yin 'das pa yi// yul la 'dzin pa min phyir ro//

30. de yi yul tu gang 'gyur ba// de ni zhig pas gsal ma yin//
de phyir 'khor lor snang ba 'di// gsal ba ma yin 'gyur ba'i rigs//

31. ri mo'i gzhi rnams mthong ba'i tshe// de la de bzhin sems mang po//
ci ste cig ca'i tshul gyis su// 'byung bar 'gyur bar 'dod na go//

32. de lta yin na dkar la sogs// rnam pa sna gcig shes pa yang//
thog ma dbus mtha' tha dad pas// dmigs pa sna tshogs nyid du 'gyur//

33. rdul phran bdag nyid dkar la sogs// gcig pu'i bdag nyid cha med pa//
shes pa gang la'ang snang gyur par// bdag gis rab tu tshor ba med//

34. rnam shes lnga yi khams rnams ni// bsags la dmigs pa'i rnam pa yin//
sems dang sems byung dmigs pa ni// drug par bzhag pa byas pa yin//

24 Cognitions of 'white' and so forth arise successively, yet because they occur [so] rapidly ordinary people [believe that they] cognize them all at once.

25 [But] when one hears [the words] 'lata' [and 'talah', i.e. a tongue twister] spoken very quickly, why are they not heard simultaneously in this case?

26 Even if we consider only conceptual cognitions, they do not cognize [aspects] sequentially. Since they do not last long they are like all cognitions, occurring rapidly [in succession].

27 Therefore objects are not apprehended sequentially, even though it appears as if [a series of] separate aspects are apprehended all at once.

28 Even with the example of a whirled firebrand [the opponent maintains that] the circle of fire that appears to arise is an illusion [produced by memory perceiving] all at once [discrete perceptions of the firebrand]. It is not created by visual perception joining together [individual] cognitions [of the torch] because the circle is seen very clearly.

29 Connecting up in this manner is done by memory, not by visual perception, because a past object cannot be perceived [in the present].

30 An object of memory is not clear since it has ceased to exist. Therefore it is logical that the appearance of the wheel would not be perceived clearly.

31 Understand that if the author agreed [with the Sautrāntikas, who hold] that [many of the same kinds of perception] occur simultaneously, then when you look at a multicoloured picture [as] many consciousnesses [as there are colours] would arise at the same time.

32 If this were so, then even the apprehension of [a single aspect like] white and so forth would be multiple, since different parts [of the white object] such as top, middle or edge would be perceived as separate.

33 I have never perceived particles [such as] white and so forth, unitary and without parts, that appear to [a first-instant] cognition.[2]

34 It is established [by the Sautrāntikas] that the five kinds of sense consciousness have aggregates [of atoms] as their object, while the sixth [i.e. the mental consciousness] has cognition and mental states (or minds and mental events: *cittacaitta*) as its objects.

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[2]Ichigō's translation is different: "To what object would the [instantaneous] cognitions [proposed by Sautrāntika] refer, since [the objects] 'white' and the like are of the nature of atoms which have no parts? The [cognition] does not [merely] perceive itself."

35. phyi gzung rnams la'ang rnam shes ni// gcig tu snang bar mi rigs te//
yon tan la sogs ldan pa yi// rdzas la sogs pa dmigs phyir ro//

36. nor bu gzhi yi bdag nyid ltar// dngos po kun zhes lta ba la//
de la 'dzin pa'i sems kyang ni// gcig pu'i ngo bor snang mi rigs//

37. sa la sogs pa 'dus pa la// yul dang dbang por kun 'jog par//
su 'dod de yi lugs la yang// dngos po gcig dang mthun 'jug med//

38. snying stobs la sogs bdag sgra sogs// phyogs la'ang don gcig snang ba can//
shes pa rigs pa ma yin te// gsum gyi bdag nyid yul snang phyir//

39. dngos po'i ngo bo rnam gsum la// de ni gal te rnam gcig ste//
de dang mi mthun snang na go// de ni der 'dzin ji ltar 'dod//

40. phyi rol yul rnams med par yang// sna tshogs snang la rtag pa ste//
cig ca'am ji ste rim 'byung ba'i// rnam shes rung bar shin tu dka'//

41. rnam mkha' la sogs shes pa dag// min tsam du ni snang ba rnams//
yi ge du ma snang ba'i phyir// sna tshogs snang bar gsal ba yin//

42. rnam shes sna tshogs min snang ba// 'ga zhig yod par gzhug na yang//
'on kyang yang dag gzhag ni rung// mtshan nyid bcas la gnod mthong phyir//

43. de phyir sna tshogs snang ba yi// rnam shes rnam pa kun tu gnas//
de ni rnam pa tha dad ltar// gcig pu'i rang bzhin mi rigs so//

44. ci ste thog ma med rgyud kyi// bag chags smin pas sprul pa yi//
rnam pa dag ni snang ba yang// nor bas sgyu ma'i rang bzhin 'dra//

35 Even according to the treatises of non-Buddhists [i.e. the Vaiśeṣikas] it is not reasonable [to maintain] that consciousness is unitary, since it cognizes [objects] such as substance *(dravya)* and so on as being endowed with qualities *(guṇa)* and so forth.

36 On the view that the inherent nature of all entities is like that of onyx/agate [i.e. the view of the Jaina and Mīmāṃsā schools), it is not logical that the consciousness that apprehends them has a unitary nature either.

37 Even according to the theory [of the Materialists, the Lokāyata) which holds that the object and the sense organs consist of [the four elements,] earth etc., cognition still does not occur as unitary.

38 And according to the view [of the Sāṃkhya] which holds that sounds and the like are in essence [nothing but the three guṇas], sattva etc., it is not reasonable [to maintain] that there is cognition of unitary objects, because objects manifest as threefold in nature.

39 How can you [the Sāṃkhya] argue that cognition actually apprehends the object? Cognition which [is said to have] a unitary nature would arise without corresponding to its object, whose essence would be the three guṇas.

40 [The Vedāntin argues that] external objects [are illusory and] do not exist, yet [the consciousness] to which the various [objects] manifest is permanent. It is extremely hard to maintain [the unitariness of] this consciousness, whether it occurs simultaneously or successively in relation to appearances.

41 Cognition of [unconditioned] entities such as space and so on is [based on] appearances of mere names. Since multiple syllables/letters appear [in these names], it is clear that such [cognitions] are multiple.

42 Although according to some people consciousness appears to be unitary, it is impossible to establish this in ultimate truth because it has been proved that any entity which is endowed with the characteristic [of existence, i.e. causal efficiency] is refuted [in ultimate truth].

43 Therefore it is established from every point of view that cognition [occurs] with the appearance of various [aspects]. It cannot have a unitary nature because there is a plurality of aspects.

44. [The Yogācārins hold that] the aspects of deluded [cognition] appear [in our consciousness] produced by the ripening of latencies in the individual continuum from the beginningless past. Yet their intrinsic nature is like an illusion since they are the result of error.

45. de dge 'on kyang de dag gi// dngos de yang dag nyid dam ci//
'on te ma brtags gcig pu na// dga' bar khas len 'di bsam mo//

46. gal te yang dag rnam par shes// du mar 'gyur ro yang na ni//
de dag gcig 'gyur 'gal ldan pas// gdon mi za bar so sor 'gyur//

47. rnam pa tha dad ma yin na// g.yo dang mi g.yo la sogs pa//
gcig gis thams cad g.yo la sogs// thal bar 'gyur te lan gdab dka'//

48. phyi rol don gyi tshul la yang// de ltar rnam par ma bral na//
gcig gi chos su thams cad kyang// 'jug par 'gyur te bzlog pa med//

49. ci ste rnam pa'i grangs bzhin du// rnam par shes pa khas len na//
de tshe rdul phran 'drar 'gyur ba// dpyad pa 'di las bzlog par dka'//

50. gal te sna tshogs de gcig na// nam mkha'i gos can lugs sam ci//
sna tshogs gcig pa'i rang bzhin min// rin chen sna tshogs la sogs 'dra//

51. sna tshogs gcig pu'i rang bzhin na// sna tshogs ngo bor snang ba dang//
bsgribs dang ma bsgribs la sogs pa// tha dad 'di ni ji ltar 'gyur//

52. ci ste ngo bo nyid du de'i// rnam pa 'di dag med pa ste//
yang dag tu na rnam med pa'i// rnam par shes la nor bas snang//

53. gal te med na ji ltar bur// de dag 'di ltar gsal bar tshor//
de yi dngos las tha dad pa'i// shes pa de 'dra ma yin no//

54. 'di ltar gang la dngos gang med// de la de shes yod ma yin//
bde ba min la bde sogs dang// dkar ba rnams la'ang mi dkar bzhin//

55. rnam pa 'di la shes pa'i don// dngos su 'thad pa ma yin te//
shes pa'i bdag dang bral ba'i phyir// rnam mkha'i me tog la sogs bzhin//

45 Even though we appreciate this [doctrine], let us consider whether these entities [i.e. the aspects] exist ultimately or are agreeable and acceptable only as long as they are not investigated critically.

46 If [the aspects were] ultimately real, either consciousness would be multiple or the aspects would be unitary. If consciousness and its aspects had contradictory natures they would definitely be distinct.

47 If aspects are not distinct it is difficult to refute consequences such as with [aspects of] movement and rest, etc., where a single [aspect of] movement would cause everything to move, and so on.

48 Even in a theory that maintains the true existence of external objects, the same applies. If the aspects are inseparable [from consciousness], one cannot escape [the fact that] everything would be reduced to a single phenomenon.

49 If consciousness were admitted [to consist of as many parts] as the number of [its various] aspects, then it would be difficult to avoid the kind of criticism that is made regarding [the reality of] particles.

50 If [you maintain that] several entities are in nature one, is your theory any different from that of the Jaina? Plurality cannot have a singular intrinsic nature, just as various precious stones cannot be a single jewel.

51 If a plural number [of things] had a single intrinsic nature, how could they manifest as plural? And how could there be a difference between [those parts of the object that are] obscured, unobscured and so on?

52 [The Anākāravādins hold that consciousness] does not intrinsically possess aspects, but by dint of an error they appear to consciousness even though consciousness is not endowed with aspects ultimately.

53 If [aspects] do not [ultimately] exist, how can they be perceived so clearly? Cognition, if different from the entity of aspects, would not be like that.[3]

54 Thus, when there is no aspect present in the knowledge [of something], there will be no cognition of it. Just as [we do not feel] pleasure when there is no pleasure, or [see] white in [that which is] not white, and so forth.

55. The term 'cognition' is not appropriate to [perception of an unreal] aspect because this is contrary to [the nature of] cognition, like a sky-flower etc.

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[3]The translation given by Ichigō: "If [images] are unreal, how can they be perceived so clearly [even by an ordinary man]? His knowledge is not the same [as non-dual or supramundane] knowledge. The latter is distinct from [the knowledge that cognizes] the appearing images."

56. med pa nus pa med pas na// gdags pa'ang mi rung rta ru bzhin//
bdag snang shes pa mi skyed la// nus pa rung ba ma yin no//

57. gang phyir de yod nyes tshor ba// shes dang 'brel ba ci zhig yod//
bdag med de yi bdag nyid dang// de las byung ba ma yin no//

58. rgyu med na ni gang zhig gis// res 'ga' 'byung ba 'di rung 'gyur//
rgyu dang ldan na gang zhig gis// gzhan gyi dbang las bzlog par 'gyur//

59. de med na ni shes de yang// rnam pa med pa nyid kyis 'gyur//
shel sgong dag pa 'dra ba yin// shes pa rab tu tshor ba med//

60. 'di ni 'khrul bas shes she na// de ci 'khrul la rag las sam//
de yi mthu yis byung na ni// de yang gzhan gyi dbang nyid do//

61. dngos po gang gang rnam dpyad pa// de dang de la gcig nyid med//
gang la gcig nyid yod min pa// de la du ma nyid kyang med//

62. gcig dang du ma ma gtogs par// rnam pa gzhan dang ldan pa yi//
dngos po mi rung 'di gnyis ni// phan tshun spangs te gnas phyir ro//

63. de phyir dngos po 'di dag ni// kun rdzob kho na'i mtshan nyid 'dzin//
gal te 'di dag don 'dod na// de la kho bos ci zhig bya//

64. ma brtags gcig pu nyams dga' zhing// skye dang 'jig pa'i chos can pa//
don byed pa dag nus rnams kyi// rang bzhin kun rdzob pa yin rtogs//

65. brtags pa ma byas nyams dga' ba'ang/ bdag rgyu snga ma snga ma la//
brten nas phyi ma phyi ma yi// 'bras bu de 'dra 'byung ba yin//

66. de phyir kun rdzob rgyu med na// rung min zhes pa'ang legs ma yin//
gal te 'di yi nyer len pa// yang dag yin na de smros shig//

56 Since that which is non-existent has no causal efficiency, like the horns of a horse, [an aspect that is non-existent] is not efficient even figuratively because it cannot produce knowledge of its own appearance.

57 So how is it that that which is definitely felt to be existent is related to cognition? [Being] non-existent [the aspect] is not of the nature [of cognition] nor is it produced from it.

58 If [an aspect] has no cause, why does it arise at different times? If it is endowed with a cause, how can its dependent nature *(paratantra svabhava)* be avoided?

59 If [the aspect] did not [truly] exist, cognition would still occur in the absence of aspects. [Yet] a consciousness like a pure crystal sphere has never been experienced (**or** can never perceive anything).

60 If it is said that [the aspect] is cognized on account of delusion, is it different from that which is contingent upon delusion? If it arises by the power of that [delusion] then it does indeed have a dependent nature.

61 Whichever entity one examines, it is not unitary. Where there is no unitariness there can be no multiplicity either.

62 An entity must be either unitary or multiple [in nature], since these [categories] are mutually exclusive. It cannot be both [at once].

63 Therefore these entities are held to be characterized only by relative [truth]. If you [still] maintain that they are actual selves then what can I say?

64 One should understand that the nature of relative [truth] is (1) that which is delightful[4] only as long as it is not investigated critically; (2) that which is subject to arising and decay; and (3) that which has causal efficiency.

65 Even that which is agreeable and acceptable as long as it is not investigated critically implies the production of similar successive effects conditioned by their own successive causes.

66 Therefore, [for an opponent to say] "if relative [existence] has no [truly existing] cause, it could not exist [at all]"—that won't do. If there is a truly existing [cause] that expropriates [the relative], tell [me] what it is![5]

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[4]Mi pham points out that when Śāntarakṣita defines the relative as 'delightful', he does not intend to exclude those things which frighten or horrify us. He is referring to all those phenomena that 'delight' the consciousness by seducing it and eliciting attachment. Delight is broader than pleasurable sensation.
[5] Ichigō's translation omits the negative. For the translation of this verse I am indebted to John Pettit.

67. dngos po kun gyi rang bzhin ni// rigs pa'i lam gyi rjes 'brang ba//
gzhan dag 'dod pa sel bar byed// de phyir rgol ba'i gnas med do//

68. yod dang med dang yod med ces// khas mi len pa gang yin pa//
de la nan tan ldan pas kyang// cir yang klan ka bya mi nus//

69. de phyir yang dag nyid du na// dngos po gang yang grub pa med//
de phyir de bzhin gshegs rnams kyis// chos rnams thams cad ma skyes gsungs//

70. dam pa'i don dang 'thun pa'i phyir// 'di ni dam pa'i don zhes bya//
yang dag tu na spros pa yi// tshogs rnams kun las de grol yin//

71. skye ba la sogs med pa'i phyir// skye ba med la sogs mi srid//
de yi ngo bo bkag pa'i phyir// de yi tshig gi sgra mi srid//

72. yul med pa la dgag pa yi// sbyor ba legs pa yod ma yin//
rnam par rtog la brten na yang// kun rdzob par 'gyur yang dag min//

73. 'o na de ni rtogs gyur pas// de yi rang bzhin mngon sum phyir//
mi khas rnams kyang dngos rnams kyi// dngos po 'di 'dra cis mi rtogs//

74. ma yin thog med rgyud lci bar// dngos por sgro btags dbang byas pas//
de phyir srog chags thams cad kyis// mngon sum rtogs par mi 'gyur ro//

75. de la sgro btags gcog byed pa// shes par byed pa'i gtan tshigs kyis//
rjes su dpog rnams shes par byed// rnal 'byor dbang rnams mngon sum gsal//

76. gzhung gis bskyed pa'i bye brag gi// chos can spangs nas mkhas pa dang//
bud med byis pa'i bar dag la// grags par gyur pa'i dngos rnams la//

77. bsgrub dang sgrub pa'i dngos po 'di// ma lus yang dag 'jug par 'gyur//
de lta min na gzhi ma grub// la sogs lan ni ji skad gdab//

78. bdag ni snang ba'i ngang can gyi// dngos po dgag par mi byed de//
de lta bas na sgrub pa dang// bsgrub bya gzhag pa 'khrugs pa med//

67. We reject the intrinsic nature of all entities postulated by those among our opponents who follow the way of logic. Therefore there is nothing to be refuted [in our system].

68 Even with the greatest effort, it is not possible to criticize in any way someone [like myself] who admits neither existence, nor non-existence, nor both existence and non-existence.

69 Therefore, ultimately there is no entity that can be established in reality. Because of that, the Tathāgatas taught the non-production of all *dharma*-s.

70 Some say that [non-production] is the highest truth since it is in accord with the highest truth. But in my view, the highest truth is that which is completely free of all [conceptual] elaboration.

71 Since there is no production and the like, there can be no non-production and so on in ultimate truth. And since the essence [of production and non-production] has been refuted, there cannot [properly] be words to express it.

72 When an object does not exist, you cannot properly apply a negative to it. Even if [non-production arises] as a concept or idea, it is [acceptable only] in relative truth, not in ultimate truth.

73 If the nature of entities can be realized directly by understanding them [conceptually], why is it that uneducated people do not understand the nature of entities in this way?

74 [Yet] they do not. They cannot realize directly because every sentient being is subject to [the habit of] imagining things as real, which from beginningless time exists in each burdensome individual series.

75 Powerful yogins realize [the ultimate] directly and clearly [because] they have cut off [the habit of] imagining. Since logical arguments produce understanding those who use inference understand.

76, 77 Leaving aside certain subjects occurring in scriptural treatises, [our] theses and reasoning can be applied without exception to all [conventional] things known to everyone, from scholars to women and children. Otherwise, how could we reply to [those who have] claimed that [we are guilty of fallacies such as] having a logical mark whose locus is unreal *(āśrayāsiddhahetu)*.

78 I have not refuted entities insofar as they are of the nature of appearance. Therefore there is no confusion regarding the establishment of the probandum and the probans.

79. de phyir thog med srid rgyud nas// dngos dang dngos med rtog sogs kyi//
rigs mthun sa bon yod par ni// rjes su dpag par bya ba yin//

80. 'di ni dngos po'i mthu stobs kyis// 'byung ba ma yin de med phyir//
dngos po rnams kyi bdag nyid de// rgya cher rab tu bkag pa yin//

81. rim gyis 'byung phyir glo bur min// rtag 'byung ma yin rtag ma yin//
de bas goms 'dra de nyid phyir// dang po rang gi rigs las skyes//

82. de phyir rtag chad lta ba rnams// gzhung 'di la ni ring du gnas//
ldog dang rjes su 'jug pa yang// sa bon myu yu lcug sogs bzhin//

83. chos la bdag med mkhas pa ni// rang bzhin med pa goms byas pas//
phyin ci log las byung ba yi// nyon mongs sgrim pa med par spong//

84. rgyu dang 'bras bu'i dngos po ni// kun rdzob tu ni mi bzlog pas//
kun nas nyon mongs rnam byang sogs// rnam par gzhag pa 'khrugs pa med//

85. 'di ltar rgyu dang 'bras bu yi// chos 'di rnam par gzhag pas na//
tshogs rnams dri ma med pa yang// gzhung 'di nyid la rung ba yin//

86. rnam par dag pa'i rgyu las ni// 'bras bu rnam par dag pa 'byung//
yang dag ltas byung tshul khrims kyi// yan lag la sogs rnam dag bzhin//

87. de bzhin rnam dag ma yin las// 'bras bu rnam dag ma yin 'byung//
log lta'i stobs las byung ba yi// log par g.yem la sogs pa bzhin//

88. tshad ma'i gnod pa yod pas na// dngos por dmigs pa yod pa ni//
smig rgyu la sogs shes pa bzhin// phyin ci log par yongs su rtogs//

89. de phyir de mthus byung ba yi// pha rol phyin pa sgrub pa kun//
bdag dang bdag gir log pa las// byung ba bzhin du stobs chung ngo//

79 Therefore [having established the non-substantiality of all things, and since things do nevertheless appear as mere experience] one must infer that there ar seeds corresponding to the ideas of existence, non-existence and the like, [which] arise from the beginningless continuum of existence.

80 These [ideas] do not arise by the force of [external] entities since the [latter] do not [truly] exist, the inherent nature of such entities having been refuted in detail.

81 Because they occur serially, [ideas] do not arise without cause, or from an eternal [cause], nor are they themselves eternal. Therefore, the first [moment of mind] arises from [a preceding moment] of its own kind, because [ideas/ appearances arise] in the manner of being habituated to something.[6]

82 Therefore both eternalism and nihilism are completely rejected in our treatise. [All entities] continue to decay and to arise [successively from causes], just as seeds give rise to sprouts, shoots and so forth.

83 Those who are skilled in [understanding] the selflessness of phenomena, through becoming accustomed to the absence of inherent nature, easily avoid the emotional afflictions that arise from mistaken views.

84 Since causal relation is not denied in relative truth, there is no confusion as to the distinction between defilement and purification, and so on.

85 Indeed, since the law of causation has been established, it is also possible in our system to gather the pure accumulations [of merit and wisdom].

86 From pure causes arise pure effects, as with the branches of pure discipline and so forth that arise from right view.

87 Likewise, from impure causes arise impure effects, as with sexual misconduct and so forth which occur as a result of wrong view.

88 Clinging to an entity [as real] is understood to be a mistaken concept because it goes against valid cognition [that those entities possess neither a unitary nor a multiple nature]. It is like the cognition of a mirage and so on.

89 Therefore, if the practice of the *pāramitā*-s arises through the force of this [clinging] it will be weak, just like the practice that results from the false views of 'me' and 'mine'.

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[6]Ichigō interprets 'gom' as referring to meditation, but it is not clear why meditation is relevant in the context. He writes: "Therefore, the [notions of production and non-production, which we have discussed] previously, arise from their own species, because they are indeed [ideas of existence and non-existence], as in meditation practice."

90. dngos por dmigs pa med pa las// byung ba 'bras bu chen po ste//
rgyas pa'i rgyu las byung ba'i phyir// sa bon grung po'i myug sogs bzhin//

91. rgyu dang 'bras bur gyur pa yang// shes pa 'ba' zhig kho na ste//
rang gis grub pa gang yin pa// de ni shes par gnas pa yin//

92. sems tsam la ni brten nas su// phyi rol dngos med shes par bya//
tshul 'dir brten nas de la yang// shin tu bdag med shes par bya//

93. tshul gnyis shin rta zhon nas su// rigs pa'i srab skyogs 'ju byed pa//
de dag de phyir ji bzhin don// theg pa chen po pa nyid 'thob//

94. khyab dang dbang la sogs ma myong// dpag tu med par gnas pa'i rgyu//
'jig rten spyi bor gyur pas kyang// shin tu myong ba ma yin pa//

95. yang dag bdud rsti dag pa 'di// thugs rje dag pa'i rgyu can gyi//
de bzhin gshegs pa ma gtogs par// gzhan gyi longs spyod ma yin no//

96. de phyir log par bstan pa yi// grub mthar 'chel ba'i blo can la//
de lugs rjes 'jug blo can rnams// snying rje nyid ni rab tu skye//

97. blo nor ldan pas lugs gzhan la// ji ltar snying po med mthong ba//
de ltar de dag skyob pa la// gus pa shin tu skye bar 'gyur//

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90 [On the other hand] the result that comes from not clinging to [the existence of] an entity is tremendous, since it results from a powerful cause [i.e. a cause that is able to bring about its ripened result] like a shoot from a sound seed, etc.

91 That which is cause and effect is nothing but mind-only. It is established that knowledge is that which is self-validated.

92 Based on the standpoint of Cittamātra, one must know that external entities do not [truly] exist. Based on this standpoint [i.e. of the non-intrinsic nature of all *dharma*-s] one must know that there is no self at all even in that [i.e. in Mind Only].

93 Therefore those who hold the reins of logic while riding the chariot of these two systems [Madhyamaka and Yogācāra] become true [followers of] Mahāyāna.

94 Even Viṣṇu, Īśvara and so forth do not experience this. Even [those beings who are] the cause of limitless qualities and held in the highest esteem by mundane people [Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas] do not experience this at all.

95 This pure and true ambrosia is enjoyed by no one but the Tathāgata, who is motivated by pure compassion.

96 Therefore the wise who follow this approach will feel intense compassion for those who, in spite of their intelligence, give credit to systems that teach wrong views.

97 Those who are endowed with the treasure of wisdom see how meaningless or pointless other systems are, and instead they develop tremendous devotion to the [ultimate] Protector, [the Buddha].

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